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# Impact of Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy on Quality of Life, and Life Expectancy in **Cardiovascular Patients**







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#### ABSTRACT

Aims Cardiovascular disease remains highly prevalent in Tehran City, Iran, necessitating a careful consideration of the quality of life among individuals afflicted with heart disease. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of recovery-oriented cognitive therapy on quality of life and life expectancy in cardiac patients.

Materials & Methods This semi-experimental study employed a pre-test/post-test design in cardiovascular patients who visited the Tehran Heart Center hospital for cardiac rehabilitation in 2022-2023. Recovery-oriented cognitive therapy was used as an intervention for the experimental group (n=24), and the control group (n=30) had no intervention. Following a month-long intervention comprising two sessions per week, patients underwent reassessment at three- and six-months post-treatment. The short form 36 (SF-36) and adult hope scale-12 (AHS-12) questionnaires were used. The data was analyzed using the Bonferroni t-test, covariance-based statistics, and one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using the SPSS 21 software.

Findings There were no significant differences in the quality of life and life expectancy parameters between the experimental and control groups. The quality of life and life expectancy showed consistent and significant improvement across all four measured time points.

Conclusion Recovery-oriented cognitive therapy positively affects the quality of life and life expectancy in cardiac patients.

Keywords Cardiovascular Disease; Quality of Life; Life Expectancy; Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy

#### CITATION LINKS

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## Introduction

Cardiovascular disease is a widespread condition that impacts many individuals globally, significantly altering their lifestyles [1, 2]. Apart from the physical implications, heart disease frequently has a profound influence on the psychological and emotional wellbeing of patients, ultimately diminishing their overall life quality [3, 4]. In addressing these concerns and promoting emotional well-being, counseling or cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can be deemed advantageous [5]. In conjunction with professional assistance, individuals with heart ailments also necessitate a robust support system and open communication with their friends and family. Social isolation and strained relationships can potentially patients' affect cardiovascular life detrimentally, but support groups and educational initiatives can aid individuals in coping emotionally and enriching their social interactions.

The role of life expectancy is significantly influenced by the severity and type of heart disease [6-8]. Conditions like congestive heart failure and severe coronary artery disease can significantly impact how long a person lives. It's crucial to identify these conditions early and provide medical treatment promptly. Delaying treatment can lead to complications and a shorter lifespan [9-11]. Moreover, the life expectancy of individuals with cardiovascular diseases is greatly affected by psychological factors. The strong connection between psychological wellbeing and cardiovascular health underscores the importance of addressing these factors to improve a patient's overall prognosis [6, 12-14]. Chronic stress and anxiety may lead to unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, making poor dietary choices, and lacking physical activity [14-16]. Psychological factors, such as self-efficacy and motivation, play a substantial role in determining a patient's capacity to adhere to recommended health behaviors. Patients who possess confidence in their ability to manage their condition and are motivated to do so are more inclined to embrace positive lifestyle alterations that can enhance their life expectancy [17]. In the case of cardiac patients, resilience, which refers to the ability to rebound from adversity, can be advantageous. Resilient individuals typically maintain a more optimistic perspective and are better equipped to tackle life's obstacles, benefiting their overall health and durability [18, 19]. In addition, the involvement of patients with healthcare practitioners is impacted by psychological elements. Patients pursuing treatment, inquiring about their condition, and actively participating in joint decision-making processes are more likely to experience positive outcomes and extend their lifespan due to enhanced disease management [20, 21].

Hence, it is imperative to integrate multidisciplinary methodologies for cardiac care that encompass provisions for mental health support, stress management, and interventions targeting behavioral modifications  $[^{22}]$ .

Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy (CT-R) is a therapeutic modality in mental health that amalgamates components of cognitive therapy with a recovery-oriented principle. The fundamental objective of this approach is to help individuals who confront mental health obstacles gain dominion over their lives and endeavor toward their ambitions and aspirations. Within the framework of CT-R, recovery is endowed with significant importance and is perceived as an intensely personal and individualized expedition toward wellness and a purposeful existence [23-27]. Unlike exclusively focusing on alleviating symptoms, recovery is regarded as a process of self-exploration, empowerment, and the attainment of goals [28-30]. CT-R endeavors to ascertain and foster an individual's aptitudes, assets, and resilience, promoting a positive perspective and a feeling of optimism. Additionally, the therapy advocates for individuals to establish connections within their communities and establish a support system. Participating in peer support groups, vocational rehabilitation programs, and other community resources that assist in recovery exemplifies this concept. A core component of CT-R involves empowering individuals to actively engage in their recovery journey, which can augment their self-esteem, self-assurance, and overall quality of life. CT-R motivates individuals to establish and pursue recovery objectives in various domains, such as employment, education, interpersonal relationships, or personal passions. Accomplishing these aims can profoundly enhance one's sense of purpose and contentment. Accomplishing these aims can significantly ameliorate one's sense of purpose and satisfaction with life. The daily functioning of individuals frequently experiences enhancement as they acquire skills to cope with their symptoms and strive towards their aspirations effectively. This augmentation encompasses better performance in occupational or educational settings, enhanced interpersonal connections, and increased capacity to engage in significant activities [23-26, 31].

Including CT-R in managing patients with cardiovascular diseases recognizes the significance of attending to the psychological dimensions of cardiovascular well-being. Its objective was to enhance the well-being and longevity of individuals with heart ailments by advocating for a more comprehensive and patient-focused approach to their treatment.

## **Materials and Methods**

This semi-experimental study employed a pretest/post-test design in cardiovascular patients who visited the Tehran Heart Center hospital for cardiac rehabilitation in 2022-2023. According to experimental research principles, the needed 113 Naghayi *et al.* 

number of samples was 15-30 [32]. 60 patients from the cardiac rehabilitation unit were chosen as convenience sampling and were eligible to participate in the study. Patients who underwent coronary artery bypass surgery and percutaneous coronary intervention were selected based on specific entry criteria; age under 70 years, their initial visit to the rehabilitation department, and a lack of concurrent psychotherapy outside the rehabilitation setting. Random allocation was implemented by a nurse utilizing a similar ball method. In this approach, 60 identical balls were prepared, each containing the labels of the two groups. Subsequently, participants were asked to select one ball each, randomly determining their group assignment. Of the 30 patients initially allocated to the experimental group. 6 declined participation in the intervention sessions, resulting in a starting count of 24 patients in the experimental group and 30 patients in the control group.

Data were gathered using the short form 36 (SF-36) and adult hope scale-12 (AHS-12) questionnaires.

Short Form 36 (SF-36): was used to assess the patients' quality of life under examination. Comprising 36 items, this questionnaire evaluates 8 distinct facets of quality of life, including general health, physical functioning, role limitations arising from physical health issues, role limitations due to emotional challenges, vitality, physical pain, social functioning, and mental health. The internal consistency of the SF-36 sub-scales, as reported by Rafaati et al., exhibited a range between 0.68 and 0.90, as determined through Cronbach's alpha analysis [33]. Furthermore, the validation study by Saleh Pour et al. [34] indicated favorable internal consistency for most SF-36 sub-scales, except for social functioning and emotional difficulties, which yielded coefficients ranging from 0.93 to 0.42 [35].

**Adult Hope Scale-12 (AHS-12):** The life expectancy questionnaire developed by Snyder *et al.* (commonly known as the Adult Hope Scale, AHS) is a widely utilized assessment tool. This questionnaire,

originating in 1991 and composed of 12 items, employs a five-point Likert scale ranging from "entirely disagree" to "completely agree" to gauge individuals' perspectives on various aspects of life expectancy. The AHS questionnaire delves into two fundamental dimensions of life expectancy: "route thinking" and "agency thinking". Notably, four lie detector questions are integrated into this questionnaire, suitable for individuals aged 15 and above. Scores on the AHS questionnaire can span a range from 8 to 64. Regarding psychometric properties, Snyder and Lopez reported that the full test demonstrated favorable internal consistency, with coefficients ranging from 0.74 to 0.84, and exhibited a test-retest reliability of 0.80 [36]. Additionally, Kermani et al. [37] established the validity coefficient of this scale by applying Cronbach's coefficient of 0.86 and a test-retest coefficient of 0.81. Furthermore, Gholamalishahi et al. [38] and other researchers have affirmed the high overall internal consistency of the 12-item life expectancy questionnaire, reporting a coefficient of 0.93, along with significant evidence of validity.

discussing the start time and cardiovascular patients participated in the treatment sessions with the staff, the hospital sent a list of the community that was the subject of the study. Getting agreement to participate in therapy, planned interventions, and therapeutic processes marked the start of the following stage. Patients in both groups received the questionnaires to fill out before the start of the therapy session. The experimental group had an intervention for two weekly sessions (each lasting one hour and thirty minutes). Patients had a second evaluation using the questionnaires once the implemented. intervention was After intervention concluded, patients were assessed again during follow-up evaluations conducted at three- and six-months using questionnaires as part of the assessment process. The outcomes of the postintervention evaluation were compared to those of the pre-intervention (Table 1).

Table 1. The content of the recovery-oriented cognitive therapy sessions

Session	Title	Goal	Description
1	Introduction and acquaintance	Communication and creating commitment	Communicating between group members with each other and with the therapist, explaining about heart disease, conceptualizing recovery-oriented cognitive therapy
2	Accessing and energizing of adaptive mode	background and providing	The therapist works with the cooperation of the members to find the interests of the group members, to create more solidarity by playing a game between the members and the therapist, and to bring patients into an adaptive mode
3	Aspirations	Identifying goals	The aspirations and the specific meanings of those aspirations are discussed and shared with the participants, and a conversation about each other's aspirations.
4	Actualizing	•	$Turning\ aspirations\ into\ small\ steps\ to\ achieve,\ planning\ positive\ activities\ between\ the\ sessions$
5	Challenges	Problem-solving	Teaching problem-solving to participants when they encounter a challenge on the way to achieving their aspirations
6	One-month follow-up		In this stage, discussions occur with the participant about the steps taken. If there are any obstacles in achieving the desired step, they are asked about, and a conversation is held regarding them.
7	Three months follow up	obstacles, and challenges	In this stage, similar to the previous one, discussions take place about the steps that have been taken or not taken. Additionally, obstacles in the path to achievement are discussed, and their negative thoughts regarding the steps, aspirations, or obstacles are challenged.

The data was analyzed using the Bonferroni t-test, covariance-based statistics, and one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using the SPSS 21 software.

## **Findings**

The mean age of the experimental group was 58.20±6.93 years, and that of the control group was

58.56±7.09 years (p>0.05). In the experimental group, 15 were male and 9 were female; in the control group, 18 were male and 12 were female. In the experimental group, 14 patients had CABG surgery, and 10 had PCI surgery, while in the control group, 16 patients had CABG surgery, and 14 had PCI surgery. There were no significant differences in the quality of life and life expectancy parameters between the experimental and control groups (Table 2).

Table 2. The mean of the descriptive parameters of pre-test, post-test, follow-up 1, and follow-up 2 in experimental and control groups

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Parameter	Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Follow-up 1	Follow-up 2
General	Experimental	49.79±8.27	54.79±5.61	67.50±5.90	70.25±6.58
health	Control	51.50±4.94	52.33±3.88	54.83±4.25	57.39±4.49
Physical	Experimental	50.42±7.79	54.17±6.86	66.46±5.80	70.25±5.49
functioning	Control	51.17±3.64	52.67±2.86	55.00±3.71	56.52±4.63
Physical	Experimental	50.21±6.51	54.58±5.30	67.92±4.87	70.25±5.20
limitation	Control	51.83±3.59	53.17±3.59	55.33±4.14	57.83±5.61
Emotional	Experimental	48.40±7.43	52.08±5.88	66.87±5.67	71.25±5.35
difficulties	Control	52.33±4.50	53.83±3.64	54.33±4.10	55.22±3.84
Physical	Experimental	48.33±5.45	51.46±4.03	67.71±6.25	70.25±6.38
pain	Control	52.67±3.88	53.83±3.64	55.67±3.88	57.39±4.74
Social	Experimental	52.71±5.89	56.25±5.94	68.12±5.07	71.25±5.10
functioning	Control	51.33±4.34	52.00±4.47	55.00±4.35	56.52±5.32
Vitality	Experimental	51.04±8.84	61.67±6.02	67.92±6.24	71.50±5.40
	Control	51.50±3.26	52.83±3.13	55.00±3.22	56.30±4.32
Mental	Experimental	51.04±7.94	59.58±5.50	67.71±5.89	72.00±5.94
health	Control	52.00±3.11	52.17±2.52	54.83±3.82	57.83±3.94
Quality	Experimental	50.24±4.17	55.88±2.92	67.54±3.44	71.35±3.07
of life	Control	51.81±2.78	52.85±3.65	54.96±1.56	56.83±2.59
Route	Experimental	8.00±2.25	9.50±2.50	14.83±2.24	16.05±2.28
thinking	Control	7.40±2.13	9.17±2.18	10.53±2.07	11.74±1.81
Agency	Experimental	8.00±2.25	9.42±2.59	14.50±2.14	15.55±2.10
thinking	Control	7.83±2.34	9.33±2.40	10.60±2.25	11.48±2.12
Life	Experimental	8.00±1.93	9.46±2.23	14.56±2.08	15.80±2.13
expectancy	Control	7.62±1.92	9.25±2.04	10.57±1.93	11.61±1.71

 $\textbf{Table 3.} \ \textbf{Comparing the periods'} \ \textbf{difference in quality of life} \ \textbf{and life}$ 

expectancy by the Bonferroni t-test

Parameter	Time (i)	Time (j)	Means Difference	p- Value
Quality	Pre-test	Post-test	-3.45	0.001
of life	Pre-test	Follow-up 1	-9.82	0.001
	Pre-test	Follow-up 2	-13.03	0.001
	Post-test	Follow-up 1	-6.37	0.001
	Post-test	Follow-up 2	-9.58	0.001
	Follow-up 1	Follow-up 2	-3.21	0.001
Life	Pre-test	Post-test	-1.58	0.001
expectancy	Pre-test	Follow-up 1	-4.72	0.001
	Pre-test	Follow-up 2	-5.90	0.001
	Post-test	Follow-up 1	-3.14	0.001
	Post-test	Follow-up 2	-4.33	0.001
	Follow-up 1	Follow-up 2	-1.19	0.001

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed the normality of the parameters' distribution. The homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was shown by the box test. Also, Levene's test demonstrated the equality of variance of the groups (df1=1; df2=41; p>0.05). Mauchly's sphericity test was used to check the equality of covariance assumption. The chi-square value obtained was not significant, and therefore, the assumption of equality of covariance was confirmed. The time (p<0.001 and  $F_{1,41}$ =533.66) group (p<0.001 and  $F_{1,41}$ =222.91) significantly affected the quality of life. Also, the time (p<0.001 and  $F_{1,41}$ =353.94) group (p<0.001 and  $F_{1,41}$ =353.94) and time\*group (p<0.001

and  $F_{1, 41}$ =519.48) significantly affected life expectancy.

The quality of life and life expectancy showed consistent and significant improvement across all four measured time points (Table 3).

### **Discussion**

In the present investigation, the utilization of CT-R exhibits considerable potential in ameliorating the standard of existence in individuals afflicted with cardiac conditions. In accordance with our discoveries, CT-R exerts a remarkable influence on two dimensions of life expectancy. Our discoveries lend support to antecedent scholarly inquiries into the psychological interventions employed in the realm of cardiac treatment. These findings substantiate earlier analyses that have established a correlation between psychological well-being, modifications in lifestyle, and cardiovascular outcomes [39, 40]. They highlight the significance of addressing the physiological and psychological dimensions of managing cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular disease often carries a notable psychological burden, encompassing anxiety, depression, and fear [41, 42]. The emphasis on cognitive restructuring in CT-R equips patients with strategies to challenge and modify negative thought patterns.

CT-R can potentially alleviate psychological distress by promoting positive thinking, affording heart patients increased emotional stability and overall well-being. CT-R equips individuals to tackle stress and setbacks effectively by attending to cognitive distortions and enhancing problem-solving abilities. Patients who acquire confidence in their capacity to cope efficiently experience a heightened sense of control over their condition, thus fostering a more optimistic perspective on life. CT-R empowers individuals to assume responsibility for their wellbeing by actively engaging patients in their recovery journey and furnishing them with the necessary tools to make informed decisions. This phenomenon of empowerment not only enhances compliance with medical advice but augments overall lifespan and self-regard [23-26, 29].

Due to the limitations imposed by physical constraints psychological anguish and the experienced, cardiovascular illness has the potential to precipitate social seclusion [43-45]. CT-R, an Recovery-oriented abbreviation for cognitive therapy, addresses the predicament of social anxiety communication proficiencies, thereby encouraging patients to partake in societal engagements and reestablish their support networks actively. Culturing superior social interactions alleviates feelings of isolation and fortifies interpersonal connections, fostering a more gratifying social existence [46, 47]. The recoveryoriented paradigm of CT-R inspires patients to perceive their encounters as occasions for personal maturation and progress. By promoting resilience and adaptability, CT-R enables individuals to discover significance and purpose in their lives despite the tribulations associated with cardiac maladies. This shift in perspective can be transformative, ultimately leading to a more sanguine and rewarding existence.

Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy significantly enhances the quality of life among individuals diagnosed with cardiovascular diseases. CT-R embodies a comprehensive strategy to support heart patients by addressing their psychological distress. cultivating adaptive coping mechanisms improved empowerment, facilitating interactions, and fostering resilience. Though the direct impact of CT-R on heart patients is still in development, the fundamental principles and techniques that underlie this therapeutic approach are well-aligned with the diverse needs of individuals with cardiovascular diseases. Long-term follow-up studies and additional research will contribute to a more comprehensive comprehension of how CT-R can be effectively incorporated into cardiac care to optimize patients' overall well-being.

Finally, CT-R offers a promising pathway for enhancing the quality of life for individuals with heart ailments by equipping them with the necessary resources and assistance to navigate their condition's

physical and emotional obstacles. As our comprehension of this therapeutic approach deepens, it can transform the field of cardiac care by implementing a more comprehensive and patient-focused framework that duly considers the physiological and psychological dimensions of heart disease.

Cardiovascular patients require physical and psychological interventions to enhance their quality of life post-surgery. Psychological interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and motivational interviewing are administered to improve patients' lives, including medication adherence, dietary compliance, and lifestyle modifications. However, there remains a gap in interventions addressing patients' aspirations and goals, which are crucial for enhancing their overall well-being. Recoveryoriented cognitive therapy aims to address patients' achievable aspirations and rectify distortions hindering progress towards them. This therapy aims to alleviate stress and anxiety, instill a sense of purpose, and potentially augment patients' life expectancy and overall health by facilitating steps toward these aspirations. This study holds potential significance for healthcare practitioners seeking to optimize patient care strategies.

This study did not include all subgroups of heart patients. Extending the intervention to encompass a broader range of patient demographics, including varying age groups and genders, would yield more comprehensive insights. Questionnaires administered online and in person, potentially introducing variability. Standardizing the delivery method would enhance data consistency. The longterm efficacy of recovery-oriented cognitive therapy in sustaining improvements among these patients remains unexplored. This study marks the inaugural implementation of recovery-oriented cognitive therapy among heart patients in Iran, offering valuable insights for healthcare practitioners. This study distinguishes itself by exploring novel variables affecting heart patients' quality of life and overall health, rendering it instrumental in elucidating various factors influencing health outcomes.

### Conclusion

Recovery-oriented cognitive therapy positively affects the quality of life and life expectancy in cardiac patients.

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**Ethical Permissions:** The Tehran Science and Research Branch, the Department of Psychology, the Institutional Ethical Review Board of Azad University all approved this study under the designation IR.IAU.SRB.REC.1402.089.

**Conflicts of Interests:** Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Authors' Contribution:** Naghavi S (First Author), Main Researcher/Discussion Writer/Statistical Analyst (30%);

Dortaj F (Second Author), Main Researcher/Discussion Writer (30%); Ghaemi F (Third Author), Introduction Writer (20%); Salari Far M (Fourth Author), Main Researcher/Methodologist (20%)

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