

Analysis of the Role of Positive Romantic Relationship Plays on Reducing Depression

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Abstract: It is very interesting to notice when we compare the data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the main age of getting depression which is from aged 18 to 24 years old is coincidence with the age of getting into a first love—from 15 to 21 years old. So there could be a very high chance for youth with depression to face the situation of making decisions about romantic relationships. The problem has formed those people with depression symptoms might be worried about whether there will be an interaction of symptoms and romantic relationships to cause a bad effect on each side. Those worrying about these problems can lead to anxiety for themselves and their partners who fall in love with them. To prove that a healthy relationship can help reduce depression levels, this study anonymously interviews depressed adolescents in romantic relationships and conducts secondary surveys to draw conclusions. Currently there are not too many studies on the effect of love relationships on depression reduction. It hopes that through the results of this study can reduce the anxiety of depressed patients about entering a romantic relationship, and at the same time, they hope to prove that healthy romantic relationship as a caring method to reduce depression can make patients healthier.

Keywords: Romantic relationships, depression, self esteem

1. Introduction

According to the definition given by the World Health Organization depression is a common mental disorder. It involves a depressed mood or loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time [1].

The research shows that depression impacts cognitive processes and behavior. There is good evidence that depressed mood affects the relative balance between positive and negative cognition [2]. Thus, depressive cognition seems to produce depressive emotions, which in turn increases the likelihood that these recognitions will lead to further depression. This interrelationship between depression and cognition may form the basis of a vicious cycle that persists and intensifies.

There's support by the human brain imaging study shows that many brain regions mediate the diverse symptoms of depression which have demonstrated changes in blood flow or related measures in several brain areas, for example including regions of the prefrontal and cingulate cortex, hippocampus, striatum, amygdala, and thalamus [3].

The evidence from the neurological site shows the negative effects of depression the neocortex and hippocampus may mediate problems in cognitive impairment and depression, such as memory

impairment, feelings of worthlessness, despair, guilt, doom and suicidal tendencies. The striatum and amygdala and their associated brain regions play an important role in emotional memory and can therefore immediate pleasure deficit (reduced motivation and reward for pleasurable activities), anxiety and decreased motivation to name a few.

Control of depression was very important. Depression can impair daily functioning, affecting relationships, work performance, and overall quality of life. When depression is managed, individuals can engage more effectively in their personal and professional lives. Secondly, depression can lead to physical health issues, including heart problems, weakened immune response, and pain. By controlling depression these risks can be reduced.

Romantic relationships refer to mutual, ongoing and voluntary interactions between two partners that are characterized by specific expressions of affection and intimacy. Baumeister and Leary [4] suggest that belonging and developing meaningful positive relationships are fundamental human motivations. Later, they suggested that the fulfillment we derive from romantic relationships cannot be obtained from non-relationships. A positive romantic relationship plays a very important role in the development of the adolescent, according to the research Romantic self-concept is related to whether one has a romantic relationship and to the quality of that relationship [5-6]. Positive romantic relationship can make the adolescent who undergoes it feel like an attractive partner this confident thought can bring happiness and self-esteem.

There's also the neurological perspective that's able to provide evidence for the positive influence that could get from the positive relationship. Positive romantic relationships have a stress-reducing and health-promoting potential, as they carry the ability to heal or facilitate beneficial motivation and behavior this process involves the secretion of oxytocin, vasopressin, dopamine, and the release of serotonergic signaling as endorphin and endogenous morphinergic mechanisms, coupled to nitric oxide auto-regulatory pathways to play a role [7].

As the conclusion from all the previous information given the researcher would like to came up with the hypothesis that the positive relationship is helpful on reducing depression.

2. Methodology

2.1. Primary research

To gather firsthand insights, an interview-based research approach was employed in this study. A sample of 2 participants, consisting of individuals who identified themselves as being in committed romantic relationships and reported themselves with depression disorder was selected. The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed responses regarding the impact of romantic relationships on depression levels, coping mechanisms employed within the relationship, and the overall influence on mental well-being.

The researcher has used the semi-structured interview method to collect the primary data which is more conversational and dynamic than the closed structure interview. Which has a set of questions that they aim to be answered, but do not have a standardized format to follow (See Appendix). This means that the conversation can flow a little bit better, while still achieving the research aim and getting relevant information from respondents. This type of interview can gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

The researcher will explain the project, the true aims and the procedure participants will go through in this interview. Researcher has also protected the participants with their both psychological and physical health in the way by telling the participants they are all allowed to stop the interview whenever they are feeling uncomfortable, researcher starts with the prompt from participants.

2.2. Findings and Analysis

The participants' responses revealed several key themes that highlight the positive effects of romantic relationships in reducing depression levels. Detail to be seen in the Appendix.

2.2.1. Emotional Support

Participants emphasized the significant role of emotional support provided by their partners. They highlighted how having a loving and understanding partner can create a sense of security and comfort, leading to a reduction in depression. Emotional support from a partner was seen as a crucial factor in managing stressors and helping individuals cope with depression-inducing situations.

2.2.2. Communication and Validation

Effective communication within the relationship was seen as a vital component in reducing depression levels. Participants described how open and honest conversations with their partners allowed them to express their fears and concerns, leading to a sense of validation. Feeling heard and understood by their partner helped alleviate depression by providing reassurance and a sense of being supported.

2.2.3. Shared Activities and Distraction

Engaging in shared activities and hobbies with their partners was found to be an effective way of reducing depression. Participants expressed that participating in enjoyable activities together helped them temporarily shift their focus away from anxious thoughts, providing a much-needed distraction and promoting relaxation.

2.2.4. Building Trust

Trust emerged as a recurring theme in the interviews. Participants highlighted how trust in their partner's commitment and loyalty contributed to a sense of security and stability in the relationship. This trust reduced depression levels by diminishing worries about the future or fear of abandonment.

2.2.5. Increased Self-Esteem

Participants reported that being in a loving relationship positively influenced their self-esteem and self-worth. The emotional support and affirmation received from their partners helped them develop a more positive self-perception, which, in turn, reduced anxiety and promoted a greater sense of overall well-being.

2.3. Secondary research

A secondary research approach was employed in this paper. A thorough review of academic journals, research papers, and reputable sources was conducted to collect relevant information on the topic. The selected studies focused on the impact of romantic relationships on depression reduction, exploring various mechanisms and factors that contribute to this positive effect.

2.4. Findings and analyses

The analysis of existing literature reveals several key findings that highlight the positive effects of romantic relationships in reducing anxiety levels.

2.4.1. Emotional Support

Numerous studies emphasize the role of emotional support provided by romantic partners in reducing anxiety. Close and supportive relationships offer individuals a haven where they can share their fears and concerns. Emotional support from a partner helps individuals feel understood, validated, and less alone, thereby reducing anxiety symptoms. According to the study conducted by KW Austin [8], in the context of intimate relationship, the emotional processing, expressive tendency and stress perception of stressors are related to daily social support processes and daily relationship outcomes.

2.4.2. Social Support

Romantic relationships provide a valuable source of social support. Partners often serve as confidants, offering encouragement, reassurance, and practical assistance. Research consistently shows a strong link between social support and lower anxiety levels, indicating that having a supportive partner can buffer against stressors and contribute to improved mental well-being. The idea that good social relationships can better buffer the development of mental health problems is put forward by Saul McLeod [9], who suggests the use of therapeutic interventions to help those with insecure attachment relationships to seek support in a more adaptive way.

2.4.3. Attachment and Security

Attachment theory John Bowlby suggests that individuals in secure and healthy romantic relationships experience reduced anxiety levels [10]. Secure attachments foster a sense of safety, trust, and stability. Partners who are responsive and available provide a sense of security, which helps alleviate anxiety by reducing worries about abandonment or rejection.

2.4.4. Coping Mechanisms

Romantic relationships can enhance an individual's repertoire of coping mechanisms. Partners often offer guidance, perspective, and practical strategies for managing depression-inducing situations. Moreover, engaging in shared activities or hobbies with a partner can provide a welcome distraction and promote relaxation, further reducing depression levels.

2.4.5. Self-esteem

Positive romantic relationships have a significant impact on individuals' self-esteem, which in turn contributes to lower anxiety levels. Partners' affirmation, love, and acceptance foster a positive self-perception, leading to increased self-confidence and reduced depression. Moreover, feeling valued and supported by a partner strengthens one's overall sense of well-being.

3. Conclusion

The primary research interviews provided valuable insights into the positive effects of romantic relationships on reducing depression levels. The findings demonstrate that emotional support, effective communication, shared activities, trust, and increased self-esteem are key factors in fostering a reduction in anxiety symptoms. These findings underscore the importance of nurturing

healthy and supportive romantic relationships as a means to promote mental well-being and alleviate anxiety.

The analysis of existing literature highlights the positive effects of romantic relationships on reducing depression levels. Emotional support, social support, attachment and security, coping mechanisms, and improved self-esteem emerge as key factors in promoting anxiety reduction within romantic relationships. These findings underscore the importance of nurturing healthy and supportive romantic partnerships as a means to alleviate depression symptoms and enhance overall mental well-being.

It is important to note that while this research highlights the positive impact of romantic relationships on anxiety reduction, each person's experience may vary. While this analysis provides valuable insights, it is essential to recognize that individual experiences may vary. Relationships are complex, and the effectiveness of anxiety reduction may depend on factors such as relationship quality, communication, and personal characteristics. Further studies are needed to explore the nuances and complexities of this relationship and to develop strategies for individuals who may not have access to such relationships. Also the sample that's being selected only includes very limited amount of people which may not be able to generalized to wild range of populations and society.

Nonetheless, the existing body of research supports the idea that romantic relationships can have a positive impact on anxiety reduction. By fostering emotional support, providing social support, promoting secure attachment, offering coping mechanisms, and enhancing self-esteem, romantic relationships contribute to improved mental health and well-being. The findings contribute to our understanding of the significant role that romantic relationships can play in promoting emotional well-being and reducing anxiety levels.

Appendix

The record of the interview amount two participants

Participate R (16 years old Chinese female, high school

student, depression disorder)

This is an unstructured interview, so there is no fixed frame. You can tell me when my questions make you feel uncomfortable and refuse to answer. You can add details when you feel you need to. This interview will be anonymous and for research and paper purposes only.)

First of all, I will ask you for some basic information. How old are you now?

R: 16

Are you in a romantic relationship?

R: Yes! It's a very stable relationship. It's been 84 days.

What do you think of the state of this relationship? Does it have any positive or negative impact on you?

R: Very stable, very good love, which makes my mental state change. Negative emotions can be contained and can feel cared for at all times.

(Short silence)

Positive impact on bad moods can be tolerated and felt all the time.

Speaking of mental state, what was your previous mental condition?

R: Very bad

Can you tell me some details?

R: There used to be a lot of pressure in my life and there is a certain amount of interpersonal communication and messy public opinion. In addition, my mind is not strong enough. I can't do what I want to do.

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

R: That's fine. I already overcome these. To be honest, the two recent relationships have taught me a lot.

Really? How did your romantic relationship help you?

R: Especially my ex, because that time was when I was in the worst mental state.

How it shows the positive effects?

R: That is, there is unconditional support and companionship. When I'm in a bad mood, I will go out for a bike ride even in the middle of the night. He's also discuss with my mother about how to make me feel better.

It is the power of companionship?

R: It's true. He also encourage me to do what I want to do but dare not do, and comfort me that everything will be fine.

How about your current relationship?

R: He/There are also some that not that much cause I just require less from the romantic relationship than I used to be.

I knew my ex is much better, but he dumped me, so I'm gonna say that there's nothing we can do about people who's leaving. He's great but the leaving of him do make me sad when we broke up.

So what is the emotional he brings to you? Let's talk about it?

R: I've been uncomfortable for a while. I feel self-blame again. Is it that my bad mood affects him? Is it that I didn't provide enough emotional value? But later I saw that it would change between people. Whether it's a friend or a lover.

There is that true for you that love is helpful in reducing depression, but the failure of love can also have a negative effect?

R: True! So there will be people who are eager to fall in love but afraid of failure. Well, you have to give up when you face to such situation. But a peaceful breakup should not have much negative impact I think.

Do you think your relationship is healthy? If it is healthy, why? If it's not healthy, why?

R: Healthy! Because both of my two romantic relationships me and my partner are respectful and treating each other.

OK, that's all of my interview thanks for your participation.

Participant J (18 years old Chinese male high school student, depression disorder)

This is an unstructured interview, so there is no fixed frame. You can tell me when my questions make you feel uncomfortable and refuse to answer. You can add details when you feel you need to. This interview will be anonymous and for research and paper purposes only.)

First of all, I will ask you for some basic information. How old are you now?

J: 18

Are you in a relationship?

J: Yes

Good! What do you think of the state of this relationship? Does it have any positive or negative impact on you?

J: It's all positive. Although sometimes I play with my girlfriend so I get no time to spend on study, also the economy consumes a lot. She did makes me feel very happy and makes me feel a sense of accomplishment.

What is the source of your sense of achievement in such a relationship?

J: Make her happy. Show off in front of friends. Learn new knowledge. Understand different lives. Then your mental state has become better because of the relationship, right?

J: Yes

So what is the mental state before falling in love?

J: Much worse than now. I'm hardly it's true that I can save more money, but I don't really find happy.

(Smiling)

I feel like get in to the relationship can make me feel better by knowing someone except my families really can about me.

Wow, that's great! So lover or romantic relationship is the one provide your positive feelings?

J: relationship. Because I'm a boring person. So I need someone to bring me some happiness like playing games. It doesn't matter who this person is. I just give crazily and then experience the pleasure of giving. My lovers feedback is of course the biggest source of happiness, but the money I spend is actually a way to buy happiness, just to buy the happiness of the other party. Because I don't have any strong material desire to achieve my happiness now. Well, I want it too expensive. So it's better to buy something, experience some time, and record good memories, which I will record.

OK, very interesting view. Would you willing to share with me about what is the positive relationship in your mind?

J: I think so to some extent, because my love relationship is separated. Some kind of bondage and bondage between boyfriend and girlfriend, so as to better achieve the purpose of complementarity, and if you meet better in a relationship chart, you can retreat completely, although this is a very irresponsible choice, but it is very convenient for me, but I will not retreat casually. To some extent, this is also bad, because it will gradually grow. I am in an irresponsible state, so people like me.

There is no way for me to get married isn't it? Although I have no intention of getting married at all.

(Smiles)

I will keep updating in front of the next object and learn from all the previous objects. So as to make the other party experience better in this society with a very high divorce rate, my way is basically the most sound view of love. One-sided words of course.

So in your opinion, in a relationship, when you don't have to take too much responsibility, you can get one. You can be happy when you have the love and emotional value from others.

J: Yes

So, in a romantic relationship, do you think love is important?

J: Whether there is love or not depends on the feedback of the other party. As long as I can give love, I will feel happy. And most of the romantics were created by me.

My lover's feedback only determines whether I will give more effort to my Romantic.

It's not very important. I enjoy the process of creating romantics. The better the feedback, the happier I am.

So from the love relationship, you can also get the gratitude of your partner and provide it to you. Positive feedback makes you feel very happy.

J: Yes, I love to get the positive feedback from my partner!

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