

# **Mental Health Related Factors in Middle-Aged Women Referring to Comprehensive Urban Health Service Centers in Northern Iran Based on Social Cognitive Theory**

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Behavioral theories believe that women have a lower ability to cope with stress and stressful situations and are therefore more prone to mental disorders such as depression. Differences in the context, type and extent of participation in social activities also affect the health status of women as a behavioral factor. Attention to the mental health of middle-aged women is more important because of the vulnerability of this period of their lives, which is due to changes and roles in the family and society. Therefore, examining mental health status is the first step for middle-aged women. The aim of this study was to determine the factors related to mental health based on social cognitive theory in middle-aged women referring to comprehensive health service centers in northern Iran in 2019. The present study is a cross-sectional study that was randomly performed on 438 middle-aged women referring to all three comprehensive health service centers. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire and consisted of three parts. Demographic characteristics (11 questions); Mental health questionnaire (GHQ 28 questions); social cognitive theory constructs (59 questions), including social support (21 questions), self-efficacy (9 questions), control axis (16 questions) and self-control (13 questions). The validity and reliability of this questionnaire were examined in the pilot section of the study and Cronbach's alpha higher than 0.7 was obtained for all structures of social cognitive theory. Data were analyzed in SPSS software version 18 using Smirnov Kolmogorov test, Spearman correlation coefficient and multivariate linear regression. The results showed that the mean score of mental health of middle-aged women with  $32.7 \pm 10.0$  indicated a mild mental disorder in this group. Among the constructs studied in social cognitive theory in this study, the structures of self-efficacy ( $p < 0.000$ ), ( $B = 0.65$ ) and social support ( $p < 0.002$ ), ( $B = 0.12$ ) have a significant and inverse relationship with mental health. That is, by promoting women's self-efficacy and increasing their social support, their mental health improves. The structure of social cognitive theory predicted 61% of the mental health of women studied ( $R^2 = 0.61$ ). The most predictive was related to self-efficacy structure. Also, the variables of drug use ( $p < 0.001$ ) and diagnosed disease ( $p < 0.000$ ) had a significant relationship with mental health. Considering the findings of the study and the high predictive power of social cognitive theory constructs in mental health, the design of intervention studies to promote and improve the mental health of this group with emphasis on the structure of self-efficacy is suggested.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Middle- Age, Social Cognitive, Women*