A Survey on the Relationship between Quality of life and Happiness among Children and Adolescents under the Supervision of Welfare Organization of Ahwaz in 2017

Run title: Relationship between quality of life and happiness among
 children and adolescents under the supervision of welfare
 organization

Maryam khormehr¹, Azam Honarmandpour², Mohammad adineh³, Azam Jahangirimehr⁴, Elham Abdolahi Shahvali¹*

 ¹. MSc of nursing, Department of nursing ,Shoushtar Faculty of Medical Sciences, Shoushtar, Iran
 ². MSc of Midwifery, Department of Midwifery, Shoushtar Faculty of Medical Sciences, Shoushtar, Iran
 ³. Nursing care Research center in chronic diseases ,school of nursing and Midwifery ,ahvaz jundishapur university of Medical Sciences ,Ahvaz, Iran.
 ⁴ MSc of Biostatistics, Department of Biostatistics , Shoushtar Faculty of Medical Sciences, Shoushtar, Iran.

20 ***Corresponding author:** Elham Abdolahi Shahvali

<u>Adress</u>: <u>Rajai</u> Street West. Shoushtar Faculty of Medical Sciences, Shoushtar,
 Khuzestan, Iran.

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25 **ABSTRACT**

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Background: Childhood and adolescence is one of the most important, most sensitive and also most decisive periods of human life. Events during this period, for children and adolescents under the supervision of the welfare organization can lead to behavioral-cognitive and emotional problems and face the natural process of transition from this period with serious challenges. This study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between quality of life and happiness among children and adolescents under the supervision of welfare organization of Ahwaz in 2015.

Methodology: This descriptive-analytical cross-sectional study was conducted on 75 children and adolescents aged 8-18, under the supervision of the welfare organization, using available sampling method. The data collection tool was a demographic information questionnaire, the Kidscreen quality of life and the Oxford happiness. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software version 20 and independent t-test, Pearson correlation coefficient, Spearman and Chi-square tests. P value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

39 Results: The results showed that there was a significant and direct correlation between quality of life and 40 happiness in children and adolescents under the supervision of the welfare (P <0.001 and r = 0.656). All 41 aspects of the quality of life in the group who did not show happiness reported to be lower.

- 42 **Conclusion:** The quality of life of children and adolescents under the supervision of welfare is related to
- their happiness. The effect of the use of pharmaceutical supplements/drugs and its relationship with the
 happiness of children should be studied in future.
 - 44 happiness of children should be studied i 45
- 45

46 Keywords: Happiness, quality of life, children, adolescents.

4748 **1. INTRODUCTION**

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- 50 In recent decades, the goal of social development programs has been to improve the quality of life and 51 well-being of individuals including children and adolescents [1]. One of the critical issues currently is the 52 establishment of a healthy physical and social environment for children and adolescents, because factors 53 that disturb their life environment will also affect their health, Therefore societies should provide the 54 appropriate environment for care, education and socialization of children and adolescents [2]. The 55 Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1924 and the rights of the child, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1959, stipulated that children need special care, 56 57 including proper legal protection, because they do not reach full development until adulthood [3].
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59 Adolescence is also considered to be one of the most important, most sensitive and at the same time 60 most decisive periods of human life [4]. Adolescence begins around the ages of 9 and 12, and the WHO defines the age of adolescence as between the ages of 11 and 21 [3]. This process is associated with 61 62 rapid physiological changes, the ability to think abstractly; increased imbalance and instability of mood; 63 concern for the future; accountability; the endeavor to obtain approval and confirmation from others, 64 especially age mates and imagination. These changes can help the normal growth of the adolescent, but can also lead to behavioral, cognitive and emotional problems. These problems, especially when 65 66 accompanied by other harmful factors such as indifferent parental upbringing or a divorce and separation at home, will undoubtedly jeopardize adolescences and greatly complicate the natural process of 67 68 overcoming such life challenges [4]. Children who have lost their parents or been deprived of a normal 69 family upbringing for other reasons are commonly held in orphanages around the world [5]. Studies show that the population of children living in such institutions is increasing every year, has tripled since the 70 71 1980's currently numbers more than 530,000 children in the United States [6]. The main reasons for 72 keeping these people in these centers can be parents' deaths, physical-psychological problems, parental 73 divorces, familial and financial problems [5] which can lead to a wide range of problems including low self-74 esteem, an increased risk of physical and psychological damage, especially depression and other similar 75 disorders [7,8]. Research has shown that the early years of life have a major role in forming an 76 individual's personality and the manner in which self-identity and self-esteem establishes itself at this age 77 manifests throughout the person's lifetime, and environment and quality of life can powerfully affect the child's interactions and personal attachments [9]. The study by Fawzy and Fouad (2010) showed that 78 prevalence of mental disorders in the children in pediatric care was 23% for depression. 45% for anxiety. 79 23% for self-confidence issues and 61% for developmental disorders. Moreover, emotional disorders 80 have reported to be high among the pediatric children [11] Children's and adolescents' quality of life will 81 82 affect various aspects of their life including their happiness [12]. The WHO defines this guality of life as "their mental and mutable sense on their health," and believes that this feeling reflects the wishes, hopes 83 and expectations of children and adolescents in relation to current and future of their life [13]. From the 84 85 viewpoint of Vinhon, happiness refers an individual's judgment of how desirable quality of life is as a goal. 86 Happiness means how much a person loves his or her life [14].

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88 Also, one of the factors that can affect the quality of life and the condition of children's development is the 89 use of pharmaceutical supplements, such as multivitamins and drugs that affect the development of the 90 child, which most families now use as advisers to their physicians. However, this is not evident in the welfare centers or it is not fully completed. According to Sing and Ellis, (1998) psychopharmacology is a 91 92 <mark>rapidly developing area in c</mark>hild and adolescent psychiatry. They also suggested that it is important for 93 clinicians to work with children with psychiatric disorders to remain up-to-date with the research literature in this field. It will be helpful for the clinicians to have a working knowledge about pharmacology of 94 95 psychiatric drugs for treating the childhood problems. Singh et al. mentioned that children differ widely in 96 terms of the drug dose that produces a given effect. Thus, clinicians must have a good knowledge of 97 current pharmacodynamic principles to understand a child's response to psychotropic drugs (Dingemanse et al., 1988; Paxton & Dragunow, 1993). According to Singh and Ellis the clinical import of 98 99 pharmacogenetics is that clinicians should be aware of the possibility of differences in drug response and 100 dose requirements among children from various ethnic and racial groups. Therefore, the inappropriate 101 use of pharmaceutical supplements for well-being children can be one of the important factors influencing 102 the development of these children and, accordingly, their quality of life. This is very complex and 103 specialized area and has not been covered here.

105 Happiness is a time when people's life activities have the highest degree of convergence or harmony 106 with their deeply-held values, abilities and effectiveness in different areas of life, and they are committed 107 to these values and abilities. In such conditions, there is a sense of vitality and confidence. Waterman has 108 said this state as the manifestation of the individual hope and high correlation between it and the 109 dimensions of happiness [15]. Since life in orphanages can have a great impact on the emotional state of 110 children and adolescents and make them prone to psychiatric and emotional disturbances, identifying the characteristics and problems that result from living in orphanages can provide an appropriate context for 111 112 preventing and mitigating their effects. [5], hence the present study aimed at investigating the relationship 113 between quality of life and happiness among children and adolescents under the supervision of the 114 welfare organization of Ahwaz in 2015.

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116 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

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118 The present study is a descriptive-analytic study investigating the relationship between guality of life and 119 happiness in adolescents and children under the supervision of a welfare organization in Ahwaz in 2017. 120 The research samples consisted of 75 children and adolescents aged 8-18 who have been residing in Ahwaz's orphanages for more than one year. Participants unwilling to take part in or continue in the study 121 were excluded from results. The data collection tool consisted of a questionnaire for demographic 122 information, the Kidscreen quality of life, and the Oxford happiness questionnaire. The demographic 123 124 information guestionnaire included information such as age, sex, degree of education, and duration of 125 stay in the orphanage. The Kidscreen questionnaire covered the participant's previous week and investigated five aspects of the participant's quality of life. One of the aspects is physical aspect with five 126 127 items covering physical activity and levels of energy and fitness. Another one is psychological wellbeing 128 with seven items evaluating positive emotions, satisfaction, and balanced feelings. The social dimension 129 with seven items, covering closeness and autonomy in parental relationships, home environment, 130 freedom corresponding to the participant's age, and availability of financial resources. Then social support 131 and age mates with four items examining the participant's relationship with peers and another four, school 132 environment aspect, looked at mental capability, including cognitive capacity, learning, concentration and feelings about school. This tool is based on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "never" to "forever" and 133 134 shows the frequency and intensity of a particular behaviour, feeling or attitude [16]. In the research of Nik 135 Azin et al. (2012), the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all dimensions except for the school environment were higher than 0.77 and the two-week re-test coefficients for all dimensions were strong (p < 0.01) (p136 137 <0.01) [17]. To investigate happiness, the Oxford happiness guestionnaire was developed and provided by Argya and Lew in 1989 [18]. The guestionnaire consists of 29 guestions with a 6-point Likert scale, 138 which ranges from "totally disagree" to "totally agree". After collection, Data were analysed by SPSS 139 140 software (version 20). Independent t-test, Pearson correlation coefficient and Spearman and Chi-square 141 were used to compare the differences between the groups. P value less than 0.05 was considered 142 significant. 143

144 **3. RESULTS**

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146 The study were included 75 children, of which (40%) were 30 girls and (60%) 45 were boys. The mean 147 age of the girls was 12.06 ± 3.07 years and the mean age of boys was 11.84 ± 3.4 and the mean age of 148 all individuals was 11.93 ± 3.24 Age did not show a significant correlation to happiness and quality of life 149 (P > 0.05). Furthermore, boys and girls showed similar levels of happiness and life satisfaction (P > 0.05). 150 The average happiness in all samples (44.97 ± 15.73) was in the range of (14-74), of which 45 (60%) reported happiness. Children and adolescents' mean quality of life (80.57 ± 8.92) showed range of 151 changes (56-97). Quality of life was shown to be (17.49 ± 3.26) for physical health, (22.76 ± 2.26) for 152 emotions and mood in general, (12.72 ± 2.51) for family relationships and leisure, (12.72 ± 2.51) for 153 relationships with friends, and $(14/01 \pm 3.12)$ for school. 154

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Data distribution was reported normal using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (P >0.05). There was a significant and direct relationship between quality of life and happiness (P <0.001 and r = 0.65), as well as between the aspects of quality of life, including physical activity and health (p = 0.001, r = 0. 50), and friends with happiness (P <0.001 and r = 0.55). There was a statistically significant difference between 160

those that reported happiness and those that did not in terms of physical and health activities (P < 0.001) and friends (P = 0.002). Quality of life in all categories was lower in the group that did not report 161 162 happiness. There was a direct and significant relationship between happiness and the category related to 163 school life (P < 0.001 and r = 0.371), but the category related to family and leisure showed no significant 164 relationship to happiness and emotions (p < 0.05). Mean guality of life was differed significantly between 165 those that reported happiness and those that did not (P < 0.001) (Table 2).

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Table 1. Frequency and percentage of frequency of demographic information of participant samples

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Demographic information		Number(percentage)	
Gender	girl	30(40/0)	
	boy	45(60/0)	
	8-9	27(36/0)	
Age	10-11	13(17/3)	
	12-13	6(8/0)	
	14-15	12(16/0)	
	16-17	17(22/7)	
Education	elementary School	44(58/70)	
level	guidance school	14(21/33)	
	high school	15(20/00)	

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Table 2. Mean Scores of Quality of Life Dimensions in the case group.

Quality of Life Dimensions	happiness	Number	Mean and standard deviation	t-test	p-value
physical health	NO	30	(15/87±2/66)	-3/84**	0/000
	Yes	45	(18/58±3/2)		
Emotions	NO	30	(22/50±2/56)	-0/810	0/421
	Yes	45	(22/93±2/04)		
Family and leisure	NO	30	(12/40±2/64)	-0/899	0/371
	Yes	45	(12/93±2/42)		
friends	NO	30	(12/26±3/54)	-3/27**	0/002
	Yes	45	(14/46±2/28)		
school and	NO	30	(13/16±3/44)	-1/95	0/055
learning	Yes	45	(14/57±2/75)		
total quality of life	NO	30	(76/20±10/30)	-3/76**	0/000
. ,	Yes	45	(83/48±6/41)		



*significant at the level of 0.01; *significant at the level of 0.05

174 175 4. DISCUSSION

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The findings of the present study show that there is a direct and significant relationship between 177 178 happiness and quality of life. Kajbaf et al. (2011) conducted studies focused couples in Isfahan's 179 counseling centers, providing them with psychological training in fostering happy attitudes to life. It was 180 found that couples' quality of life increases with happiness education [19]. Islami and colleagues (2011) also noted a strong relationship between happiness and quality of life. In their study aimed to investigate 181 182 the effectiveness of a group-based reality-therapy approach on happiness and quality of life for Mashhad 183 teenagers who had poor parental upbringing, reported that a poor family environment is strongly 184 correlated to a loss of happiness and general sense of dissatisfaction in life [16]. This is consistent with the result of the present study. This study found no significant difference between girls and boys 185 186 regarding happiness and quality of life. Demographic happiness studies by Safari (2009) and Siamian 187 (2012) also concur, finding no observable relationship between gender and happiness in interpersonal 188 communication [20, 21].

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190 This study found a positive and significant relationship between happiness and physical health. These 191 findings are supported by Shakirinia and colleagues (2015), who showed that increasing physical activity 192 and physical health led to higher levels of happiness [22]. Rodriguez-Ayllon et al. (2017) stated that 193 increased levels of physical fitness could have significant benefits to the mental health of children and 194 increase their mental happiness [23]. This is consistent with the result of the present study. According to 195 the findings of this study, there was a positive and significant relationship between happiness and 196 relationships with friends, that is, those who had higher happiness could have better and more creative interaction with their friends, classmates and community. This is consistent with - Meyzari Ali et al. (2016) 197 found in their study that happy people have a more cooperative disposition and derive greater satisfaction 198 interacting with those who live around them. They also stated that happiness, as one of the basic positive 199 emotions, has a decisive role in creating altruism and empathy in individuals and society [24]. Montazeri 200 (2012) stated that happy people enjoy better social relations than others [25]. Nasratinejad and 201 colleagues (2015) showed in their research that participation has the greatest impact on the happiness of 202 203 young people, and young people who have a stronger social participation have report higher levels of 204 happiness [26]. This is consistent with the result of the present study. The school and learning dimension also directly and significantly impacted happiness and quality of life. That is, people who had higher levels 205 206 of happiness had more academic achievements and learned more effectively at school. In Saffari's study 207 (2013), which investigated the relationship between happiness and self-confidence and academic 208 achievement in students, showed that happiness leads to more academic achievements [27], kimarati 209 (2013), in his research on the relationship between social capital and happiness with academic 210 achievements in female high school students, showed similar results [28]. Neaz Azeri (2012), in her study examining the effect of happiness and vitality on the academic achievement of high school students in 211 Sari, reported that a lively and caring environment greatly impacted the flourishing of talents, creativity, 212 dynamic and creative training, academic achievement, health and happiness of students, so it is clear 213 that vitality can powerfully influence students' mental and physical wellbeing [29] The "feeling and mood" 214 and "family and leisure time" did not show a strong relationship to happiness. Shakiba's study (2011), 215 showed that a warm and friendly family environment as well as good emotional relationships between 216 217 family members improves children's mental health and promotes a happy and healthy personality 218 whereas disrupted families and a lack of emotional support from parents cause social disturbances and 219 psychological problems as well as a weak mental state [30]. The results of Islami's (2015) and kardeh kar 220 's (2011) study, which examined the relationship between leisure time with happiness and the selfconfidence of teachers, showed that leisure time has an impact on the happiness and self-confidence of 221 222 teachers, meaning that engaging in more leisure activities, namely physical exercise, increases levels of 223 happiness and positivity [31, 32]. Also, kardeh kar reported that there is a significant relationship between 224 leisure time and all dimensions of happiness, which include life satisfaction, self-esteem, mental well-225 being, satisfaction, and positive mood [32]. The results of these studies contradict the findings of this study. The reason for this discrepancy could be differences in age, place of residence and living 226 conditions of the participants. The current study showed that participants who reported low happiness 227 also showed lower results in all aspects of guality of life. The results of published research by Islami 228 229 (2011) [16], Meyzari Ali (2016) [24], Kajbaf (2011) [19], Shakirnia (2015) [22], Nasratinejad (2015) [26] showed a significant relationship between happiness and quality of life subscales, which is consistent with 230 231 the results of this study.

5. CONCLUSION

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In general, this study indicates that increasing the happiness of children and adolescents under the supervision of welfare organizations can be an effective step in improving their quality of life in all aspects. It is suggested that in a future study, the extent of the use of pharmaceutical supplements and its relationship with the quality of life and happiness of children covered by well-being should be examined.

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242 CONSENT DISCLAIMER

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As per international standard or university standard, patient's written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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255 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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The authors had not any financial or personal relationships with other people or organizations during the study. So there was no conflict of interests in this article.

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