

# Investigating the relationship between watching satellite channels and intimacy and marital satisfaction of couples in Isfahan, Iran, in 2014

Zohre Babaie<sup>1</sup>, Mahrokh Keshvari<sup>2</sup>, Ahmadreza Zamani<sup>3</sup>

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** In the age of communication and media that families are rapidly driven towards using satellite channels and other media, considering family health in this regard is essential. A determinant of health is marital satisfaction. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between watching satellite channels and intimacy and marital satisfaction in Isfahan, Iran.

**Materials and Methods:** This cross-sectional and correlational study was conducted on one group of 480 couples ( $n = 960$ ) participating from 8 health-treatment centers in Isfahan. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used in this study. Inclusion criteria included at least 2 years of marriage. After completion of Bagarozzi's Marital Intimacy Questionnaire and ENRICH Marital Inventory, the couples were divided into two groups based on watching satellite networks. Data were analyzed using SPSS 18.

**Results:** There was a significant relationship between intimacy and marital satisfaction in both viewers and non-viewers of satellite channels ( $P < 0.050$ ). Average duration of couple's interaction in the satellite viewing group was 22.4 minutes and in non-viewers group was 47.95 min. In addition, the duration of interaction had a significant relationship with marital satisfaction and intimacy ( $P < 0.050$ ).

**Conclusions:** This study showed that watching satellite channels reduced the intimacy and marital satisfaction of the couples, and duration of interaction among the couples.

**Key words:** Couples, Intimacy, Iran, marital satisfaction, watching satellite networks

## INTRODUCTION

A healthy society depends on healthy families and healthy couples. One of the determinants of a healthy family is marital satisfaction.<sup>[1]</sup> One of the

factor associated with marital satisfaction is intimacy. To promote the intimate emotional bond among family members, interaction and communication with a true mutual understanding is required.<sup>[2]</sup> Another factor associated with marital satisfaction is the role of the media, and in particular, satellites. Not only can satellites directly affect all members of the society it also has an important impact on institutions such as the family.<sup>[3]</sup> Metani *et al.* in 2013 concluded that people of all ages spent an average of 3 h per day watching satellite networks.<sup>[4]</sup> This amount of use can reduce verbal communication between family members. Moreover, it can lead to increased individualism and reduced collectivism; this issue has been considered to be a factor that can damage family cohesion.<sup>[5]</sup> Numerous studies have been conducted on this media (satellite), some of which will be mentioned in this study. The results of

<sup>1</sup>Student Research Center, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran, <sup>2</sup>Nursing and Midwifery Care Research Center, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran, <sup>3</sup>Professor of Preventive and Community Medicine, Department of Community and Family Medicine, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

**Address for correspondence:** Dr. Mahrokh Keshvari, Nursery and Midwifery Research Center, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: keshvari@med.mui.ac.ir

Submitted: 15-Jan-16; Accepted: 05-Apr-16

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: <a href="http://www.ijnmrjournal.net">www.ijnmrjournal.net</a>
	DOI: 10.4103/1735-9066.197678

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

**For reprints contact:** [reprints@medknow.com](mailto:reprints@medknow.com)

**How to cite:** Babaie Z, Keshvari M, Zamani A. Investigating the relationship between watching satellite channels and intimacy and marital satisfaction of couples in Isfahan, Iran, in 2014. Iranian J Nursing Midwifery Res 2016;21:562-5.

some studies demonstrated a negative relationship between media and marital satisfaction.<sup>[3,6]</sup> However, the amount of use and the type of satellite channels cannot be ignored. In regards to the relationship between satellite channel use and family relations, studies have shown that families who did not use satellite networks compared to families who used satellite networks had significantly better family relations.<sup>[7]</sup> In general, families who do not use satellite networks have a stronger family structure compared to families who do. In another study, an inverse relationship was observed between the use of satellite networks and family structures.<sup>[8]</sup> In line with this subject, it should be noted that, according to family counseling specialists and experts, satellite networks have an important role in the analysis of factors that cause changes in the institution of family in the age of communication. Satellites have made possible the experiencing of intercultural relations with minimum expenses, which has facilitated the increasing use of this media. However, this media has in fact increased the contradictions in human relations and has reduced face-to-face interactions and understanding among individuals.<sup>[9]</sup> Given the importance of the family and the factors affecting spousal relations and the use of satellites by the majority of families as a way to spend family leisure time, pathological studies must be conducted on satellite networks' effects on factors influencing spousal relations (marital satisfaction and intimacy). Nevertheless, no studies were found in this regard in the field of medical sciences, especially community health nursing. There were few studies on the relationship between watching satellite channels and marital satisfaction and marital intimacy. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study with the aim of investigating the relationship between watching satellite channels and intimacy and marital satisfaction in Isfahan, Iran, in 2014.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional and correlational study was conducted on one group of 960 participants (consisting of men and women) in 2014. The number of samples was estimated based on the following formula:  $n = (Z_1 + Z_2)^2 S^2/d$ , with confidence interval  $Z_1 = 95\%$  and test power  $Z_2 = 80\%$  ( $n = 439$  couples). With the consideration of a 10% sample loss, this number was increased to 480 couples. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used in this study. In the first step, one health center was selected from the provincial health department using simple random sampling method. Then, from this center, 8 health-treatment centers were chosen randomly. Among these centers, 120 couples were chosen and entered into the study via systematic sampling method, a random number table, and based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included at least 2 years of marriage, willingness to participate in the study, the

absence of any previous physical and mental illnesses, and the ability to read and write Persian. The exclusion criteria included lack of response to more than 20% of the questions.<sup>[3]</sup> A written informed consent was obtained from each participant. This research was approved by the ethics committee of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran.

## Study design

To collect data, a questionnaire consisting of three parts was used. The first part included demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, occupation, length of interaction, and whether they watched satellite networks or not). The second part consisted of the ENRICH Marital Inventory,<sup>[10]</sup> and the third part included Bagarozzi's Marital Intimacy Questionnaire.<sup>[11]</sup> The validity and reliability of the questionnaires were approved in the studies by Asoodeh et al.<sup>[12]</sup> and Etemadi.<sup>[13]</sup> The questionnaire was distributed among the participants and they had to complete it individually. Information was collected within 2 months. After receiving the completed questionnaire, the subjects were divided into two groups (satellite viewers and nonviewers). High scores in the ENRICH Marital Inventory indicated low satisfaction and low scores showed high marital satisfaction due to reverse scoring. In Bagarozzi's Marital Intimacy Questionnaire, higher scores indicated higher intimacy and lower scores indicated lower intimacy.

## Statistical methods

All quantitative variables are presented as mean and standard deviation [Table 1]. To compare the marital satisfaction and intimacy and duration of interaction in the group of nonviewers of satellite networks and viewers of satellite group, F-test was used. To determine the association between dependent and independent variables, Pearson correlation coefficient was used. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (version 18, SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). Significant levels were set to be *P* value less than 0.05.

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation score of marital satisfaction, intimacy, and duration of interaction of couples living in Isfahan in 2014 based on satellite use**

Variable	Viewers of satellite Mean (SD)	Non-viewers of satellite Mean (SD)	F	P value
Marital satisfaction	38.75 (12.04)	30.12 (7.85)	$F_{(1,471)}=86.06$	<0.001
Intimacy	60.13 (12.7)	69.59 (9.97)	$F_{(1,476)}=81.97$	<0.001
Duration of interaction (minutes)	22.4 (7.98)	47.95 (31.41)	$F_{(1,956)}=292.7$	<0.001

The results of F-test showed that there was a significant difference between marital satisfaction scores and the intimacy scores along with mean score of the couples' duration of interaction in the two groups ( $P<0.001$ )

## Ethical considerations

This research was approved by the ethics committee of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran.

## RESULTS

In this study, 960 subjects (480 couples) participated. The mean score of the couple's marital satisfaction and intimacy and duration of interaction based on watching satellite networks are presented in Table 1. The mean marital satisfaction in viewers and nonviewers of satellite networks was  $38.75 \pm 12.04$  and  $30.12 \pm 7.85$ , respectively. Therefore, there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding marital satisfaction ( $P < 0.001$ ). The mean score of intimacy of viewers and nonviewers of satellite channels was  $60.13 \pm 12.7$  and  $69.59 \pm 9.97$ , respectively. The results also showed a significant difference between the two groups in terms of intimacy ( $P < 0.001$ ). The mean interaction duration between the couples in viewers and nonviewers of satellite channels was  $22.4 \pm 7.98$  minutes and  $47.95 \pm 31.41$  minutes, respectively. These results also indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups in terms of duration of interaction between the couples ( $P < 0.001$ ). The Pearson correlation coefficient also showed that there was a significant relationship between intimacy and marital satisfaction ( $P < 0.050$ ) and this relationship was stronger in the group of non-viewers of satellite. Moreover, the duration of interaction had a significant relationship with intimacy and marital satisfaction ( $P < 0.050$ ) [Table 2].

## DISCUSSION

In the present study, a significant difference was observed between the mean scores of marital satisfaction and intimacy and the duration of the couples' interaction among the two groups of viewers and nonviewers of satellite networks. This study showed that watching satellite channels reduced the intimacy and marital satisfaction of the couples and duration of interaction among the couples. The findings of some studies were in agreement with that of the present study including the study by Shakerinia.<sup>[14]</sup> In his study in Rasht, Shakerinia indicated that satellite viewers have weaker social capital, low life satisfaction, and undesirable mental health.<sup>[14]</sup> Furthermore, Sharievska suggested that people with low marital satisfaction are drawn to the use of

social networks and experience their positive and negative effects.<sup>[15]</sup> Rianne, C, Farrugia, . 2013 in a comparative study entitled trust, community, and gender studied mutual trust between the two genders and explained that media, both in terms of access and use, has a significant relationship with mutual trust.<sup>[16]</sup> The fundamental point is that the greater the access to the media, the more the mutual trust between people is reduced. It can be assumed that access to and use of media can reduce mutual trust between people through analyzing different life aspects and relationships and illustration of its negative aspects and occupying leisure time and replacing people's relationships with media. Mutual trust between individuals has a direct relationship with creating intimate relationships.<sup>[16]</sup> Other comparative studies can be noted regarding the relationship between intimacy and marital satisfaction of the two groups.<sup>[6,17-22]</sup> In a longitudinal study, researchers concluded that insincerity among young couples was the predictor of divorce during middle-age years. One of the causes of divorce is low marital satisfaction, and these two components (intimacy and marital satisfaction) can be linked to each other. A similar study showed that the more the couples interacted the less time they spent watching satellite channels.<sup>[5]</sup> In other words, more intimacy is possible as a result of more interaction. People who experience this intimate relationship through using online social networks attempt to maintain and even increase this connection. Interacting with media prevents the interaction of the family and reduces mean interaction among family members.<sup>[23]</sup> In a similar study, it was observed that marital satisfaction, especially for women, was associated with the consulting of spouses with one another.<sup>[24]</sup> The studies of Amato *et al.*<sup>[25]</sup> and Johnson and Anderson<sup>[26]</sup> showed that the more time people spend with each other and interact with each other the higher their marital satisfaction will be. The present study had some limitations. This was a descriptive analytical study and it could show the relationship between the variables, however, it could not determine their effectiveness. There were also problems related to the high volume of samples and establishing mutual trust and feelings of security among the participants. The researcher tried to provide comprehensive information about the study and the participants results in order to create a sense of mutual trust. Couples' psychological conditions can also be considered as a confounding factor. Its impact could not be ignored during the completion of the questionnaire. In general, the results of this study and previous researches have established the need for education regarding the positive and negative consequences of satellite programs.

## CONCLUSION

This study showed that the mean scores of intimacy, marital satisfaction, and duration of interaction were higher in the

**Table 2: The correlation coefficient between marital satisfaction, intimacy, and duration of interaction of couples living in Isfahan in 2014**

Variable	Duration of interaction
Marital satisfaction	$r=0.13, P=0.004$
Intimacy	$r=0.2, P=0.001$

The Pearson correlation coefficient showed that there was a significant relationship between intimacy and marital satisfaction and duration of interaction of couples. ( $P < 0.050$ )

group of nonviewers of satellite networks compared to the group of viewers. Watching satellite programs is associated with intimacy, marital satisfaction, and interaction among couples.

### Acknowledgement

This article was derived from a master thesis of zohre babaie with project number 394305, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran.

### Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

### REFERENCES

1. Pourmeidani S, Noori A, Shafiqi A. Relationship between life style and marital satisfaction. *J Family Res* 2014;10:331-4.
2. Vatani S. Media and role in family bonds. Available from: <http://www.golestaneertebatat.blogfa.com/post/106/2014/r270724.htm>.
3. Azarakhsh F. Investigating the relationship between media consumption and marital satisfaction in married women living in Takestan 2012. Master thesis women's studies. College of social sciences and economy. AL Zahra University.
4. Matani M, Hasanzadeh R, Farhangi AA. Contact ghaem shahry view to satellite television network. *Culture studies-Communication* 2013;14:129-56.
5. Rezaie BM, Ahmadi S. Look at the positive and negative effects of television on family function. *J Media Fam* 2013;2:52-3.
6. Davies JJ, Bird B, Chaffin C, Eldridge J, Hoover A, Law D, *et al.* Habitual, unregulated media use and marital satisfaction in recently married LDS couples. *West J Commun* 2012;76:65-85.
7. Wagheiy Y, Miri MR, Ghasemipour M. A survey about effective factors on the marital satisfaction in employees of two Birjand universities. *J Birjand University Med Sci* 2010;16:43-50.
8. Safarishali R. The role of Persian language satellite channels on the family structure. Research project supported by the Ministry of the Interior, 2011.
9. Roshan M, Khalilzadeh SM. Family rights and satellite broadcasted programs. *J Fam Res* 2014;9:507-23.
10. Fowers BJ, Olson DH. ENRICH Marital Inventory: A discriminant validity and cross-validation assessment. *J Marital Fam Ther* 1989;15:65-79.
11. Bagarozzi DA. Marital/family developmental theory as a context for understanding and treating inhibited sexual desire. *J Sex Marital Ther* 1987;13:276-85.
12. Asoodeh MH, Khalili S, Daneshpour M, Lavasani MG. Factors of successful marriage: Accounts from self described happy couples. *J Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2010;5:2042-6.
13. Etemadi O, Navabinezhad SH, Ahmadi S, Farzad VE. A study on the effectiveness of cognitive- behavioral couple therapy on couple's intimacy that refer to counseling centers in Isfahan. *J Psychol Stud* 2005;2:69-87.
14. Farrugia RC. Facebook and relationships: A study of how social media use is affecting long-term relationships. Rochester Institute of Technology 2013;9:4.
15. Sharaievska I. Family and marital satisfaction and the use of social network Technologies. Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 2012.
16. Azadarmaky T, Kamaly A. Confidence, community and sex: A comparative study of mutual trust between the sexes. *J Sociol Iran* 2004;5:100-32.
17. Weinberger MI, Hofstein Y, Whitbourne SK. Intimacy in young adulthood as a predictor of divorce in midlife. *Pers Relatsh* 2008;15:551-7.
18. Laurenceau JP, Barrett LF, Rovine MJ. The interpersonal process model of intimacy in marriage: A daily-diary and multilevel modeling approach. *J Fam Psychol* 2005;19:314-23.
19. Kunaszuk RM. Intimacy, libido, depressive symptoms and marital satisfaction in postpartum couples. Doctoral dissertation, Drexel University. 2009.
20. Simonelli C, Tripodi F, Rossi R, Fabrizi A, Lembo D, Cosmi V, *et al.* The influence of caregiver burden on sexual intimacy and marital satisfaction in couple with an Alzheimer spouse. *Int J Clin Pract* 2008;62:47-52.
21. Sepahmansur M, Mazaheri M. Compare the elements of love between married with marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Abstract second congress of pathology family in Iran 2006. p. 217.
22. Eckert RM. Intimacy, Libido, Depressive Symptoms and Marital Satisfaction in Postpartum couples. Doctoral Nursing Practice Dissertation, Drexel University. 2009.
23. Rau PL, Gao Q, Ding Y. Relationship between the level of intimacy and lurking in online social network services. *Comput Human Behav* 2008;24:2757-70.
24. Rehman US, Holtzworth-Munroe A. A cross-cultural examination of the relation of marital communication behavior to marital satisfaction. *J Fam Psychol* 2007;21:763-95.
25. Amato PR. *Alone together: How marriage in America is changing*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press; 2007.
26. Johnson MD, Anderson JR. The longitudinal association of marital confidence, time spent together, and marital satisfaction. *Fam Process* 2013;52:244-56.