

The effect of a life skills education program on mental health and social competencies among young prisoners in Cambodia: an intervention study

Mental health problems

Table 1 displays the total score in the YSR and all subtypes of mental health problems in the intervention and control group before and after the LSE program. In the post-assessment, three months after intervention, young prisoners in both groups reported fewer mental health problems. The total YSR means of the control and intervention groups were 61.91 and 64.80, respectively, in the pre-assessment stage, decreasing to 50.59 and 57.83, respectively, in the post-assessment; however, the pre-post difference was not statistically significant (DiD=3.78, $p=0.34$). Smaller differences were found among the different dimensions of the YSR, with none of them statistically significant.

*Table 1: Means in the pre- and post-assessment stages and difference-in-difference (DiD) of YSR in the control and intervention groups after adjustment for prisons**

	Type of group	Pre-assessment	Post-assessment	DiD	P-value
Total YSR	Control	61.91	50.59	3.78	0.34
	Intervention	64.80	57.83		
Anxiety/depression	Control	10.90	8.73	0.20	0.78
	Intervention	11.20	9.33		
Withdrawal depression	Control	5.84	4.65	0.12	0.79
	Intervention	6.29	5.27		
Somatic complaints	Control	6.91	6.57	-0.41	0.53

	Intervention	7.41	6.76		
Social problems	Control	7.76	5.87	0.49	0.42
	Intervention	8.12	6.83		
Thought problems	Control	6.10	5.13	0.85	0.13
	Intervention	6.21	6.20		
Attention problems	Control	7.63	6.11	0.13	0.80
	Intervention	7.96	6.62		
Rule-breaking behavior	Control	7.61	6.44	1.01	0.12
	Intervention	7.92	7.77		
Aggressive behaviors	Control	9.17	7.09	1.39	0.12
	Intervention	9.69	9.05		
Internalizing problems	Control	23.66	19.95	-0.10	0.95
	Intervention	24.90	21.36		
Externalizing problems	Control	16.78	13.53	2.40	0.09
	Intervention	17.62	16.83		

** Lower values indicate fewer mental health problems*

Life skills competencies

The total LSD-AF means of the control and intervention groups were 112.89 and 112.14, respectively, in the pre-assessment stage, increasing to 113.48 and 113.15, respectively, in the post-assessment; however, there was no significant pre-post difference between the two groups (DiD=0.39, $p=0.80$) (Table 2). A similar pattern, with an increase in life skills after the

intervention, was found across all four sub-domains of the LSD-AF (human relationship skills, problem-solving skills, health maintenance skills, and skills in purpose in life), but no significant differences were found between the control and intervention groups in the pre-post assessment analyses.

*Table 2: Means in the pre- and post-assessment stages and difference-in-difference (DiD) of the LSD-AF in the control and intervention groups after adjustment for prisons **

	Type of group	Pre-assessment	Post-assessment	DiD	P-value
Total LSD-AF	Control	112.89	113.48	0.39	0.80
	Intervention	112.14	113.15		
Human relationships	Control	19.89	20.12	-0.16	0.71
	Intervention	20.11	20.23		
Problem-solving skills	Control	17.84	17.81	0.54	0.17
	Intervention	17.50	18.02		
Health maintenance	Control	31.96	32.86	-0.54	0.33
	Intervention	31.86	32.22		
Purpose in life	Control	43.22	42.70	0.55	0.56
	Intervention	42.67	42.69		

** Higher values indicate higher life skills competencies*