

Effect of Relaxation Techniques to Reduce the Stress among Senior Citizens

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Abstract: *Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused as a result of our response to what happens around us. Stress is a multidimensional phenomenon which is focused on dynamic relationship between the individual and the environment. It is also defined as a stressor, individual's response to the stimuli and interaction between the individual and the environment. It should be noted that some degree of stress can be effective on increasing and improving individual's performance. Evidences indicate that most of the human successes are created in stressful conditions; but high rate of stress would followed by numerous consequences, including mental and physical illnesses, sleep disorders, restlessness, irritability, forgetfulness, abnormal fatigue, reduced individual's resistance and recurrent infections, headaches, poor concentration, memory impairment and reduce in problem solving ability. In relation to age, 37% of the samples were in age group of 66- 70 years. The assessment of level of stress shows that 13% of the senior citizens are having mild stress level, 80% of them having moderate stress level, 7% of them are having highly perceived stress level. Comparison of pre-test and post –test level of stress among senior citizens shows the overall pre- test stress score among senior citizens was 58.1 with standard deviation of 12.36. And the post- test, they had scored 19.63 with standard deviation of 5.83. It is statistically significant. Difference between pre-test and post-test stress analysed by using paired t- test. There was significant association found between the post test level of stress and demographic variables such as religion, marital status, monthly income and source information about relaxation techniques. Education in evidence based care gives the opportunity to nurses to improve their ability to use theoretical knowledge in practice. Stress is the factors which causes more psychological problems in our life. It occurs when a person has difficulty dealing with life situations, problems and goals. Each person handles stress differently; someone can thrive in a situation that creates great distress for another.*

Keywords: Relaxation techniques, stress, senior citizens, old age homes

1. Introduction

Growing old in a society that has been obsessed with youth may have a critical impact on the mental health of many people. This situation has serious implications for psychiatric nursing. At any age, stress is a part of life, young and old alike have to face difficult situations and overcome obstacles. While young adults struggle to establish a career, achieve financial security or juggle work and family demands, older people may face failing health or dwindling finances or simply the challenges of retaining their independence. Unfortunately, the body's natural defences against stress gradually break down with age. But many seniors still manage to stay through their later years. "Successful seniors" tend to have few things in common.

Emotional stress is more subtle, and if it is chronic, the eventual consequences can be as harmful. Stress hormones (cortisol and adrenaline) provide energy and focus in the short term, but too much stress over too many years can throw a person's system off balance. Overload of stress hormone has been linked to many health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure and weakened immune functions. For older people already at heightened risk for these illnesses, managing stress is particularly important. (1) Virginia stated that "The negative effects of long term stress is one of the reason why some older adults show poor brain function and perform poorly in memory tests. With increasing age, people are more susceptible to physical, psychological, social & emotional problems." Elderly abuse is a very sensitive and delicate issue and is becoming very common in these days. It ranges from simple ignorance of their emotional needs to removing the aged forcefully from the house.(2)

2. Related Work

2.1 Statement of the Problem

A study to assess the effectiveness of relaxation techniques to reduce the stress among senior citizens.

2.2 Objectives

- 1) To assess the stress level among senior citizens.
- 2) To teach and educate about the relaxation techniques among senior citizens.
- 3) To compare the pre test and post test level of stress among senior citizens.
- 4) Association of post test stress level among senior citizens with demographic variables.

3. Methodology

This study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of relaxation techniques to reduce the stress among senior citizens residing in selected old age homes at Chennai.

Research Design

A experimental comparative design was for this study chosen.

Research Approach

The quantitative approach was used for this study.

Setting of the Study

The study was conducted in old age home in Chennai.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was the senior citizens who are residing in old age home in Chennai

Sample

Senior citizens who are 60 years and above, who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were selected as samples.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used.

Criteria for Sample Selection**Inclusion criteria**

The senior citizens who are

- Above 60 years of age in both sexes
- Willing to participate
- Available during data collection period
- Senior citizen who are understand and able to respond

Exclusion criteria

The senior citizens who are

- Bed ridden or confine to bed.
- Who cannot follow the instructions.
- Who cannot able to read Tamil or English.
- Having disturbance in memory.
- Chronically ill.
- Having disease condition which restricts the activity. (Example) High blood pressure, Heart disease.
- Having hearing loss, blindness and not having hearing aids.

Data Collection Tool

The data was collected from the senior citizens using semi-structured interview schedule.

Description of the Data Collection Tool

The tool prepared in this study was based on the information gathered from the review of literature, objectives of the study.

Part-I: It consisted of questions regarding demographic variables of senior citizens with stress symptoms like age group, gender, educational status, religion, marital status, monthly income, source of income, knowledge about relaxation techniques.

Part-II: It consisted of 3 sections such as, physical symptoms, psychological symptoms, emotional symptoms to assess the effectiveness of relaxation techniques.

4. Results and Discussion

The data obtained was classified and presented under the following sections.

Section-I

Frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic data of the samples with stress symptoms (Physical, Psychological, Emotional symptoms).

Section-II

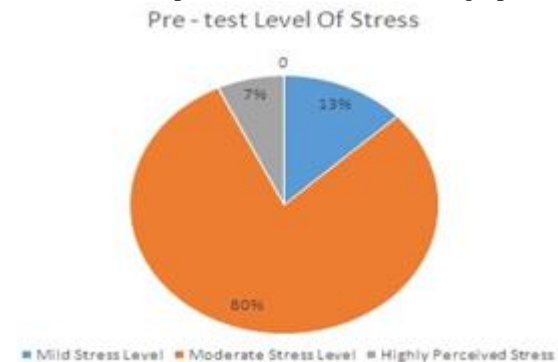
Frequency and percentage distribution of the pre stress level.

Section-III

Frequency and percentage distribution of the post stress level.

Section-IV

Association of post stress level with demographic variables.

**Frequency and percentage distribution of pretest level stress among senior citizens**

Level of stress	F	P (%)
Mild stress level	4	13
Moderate stress level	24	80
Highly perceived stress level	2	7

Table 2.4: shows that level of stress before administration of relaxation techniques. 13% of the senior citizens are having mild stress level, 80% of them having moderate stress level, 7% of them are having highly perceived stress level.

5. Conclusion

The collected data were tabulated and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and results were interpreted. The discussion is based on the objectives specified in study.

The significant findings of the study were as follows In relation to demographic variables

In relation to age, 37% of the samples were in age group of 66- 70 years.

Regarding the gender, 80% of samples were female.

In relation to educational status, 27% of samples were high school education and graduates.

Regarding religion 70% of samples belongs to Hindu religion.

Regarding the marital status, 87% of the samples were widow / widower.

In relation to monthly income, 40% of the samples monthly income was above Rs. 15000

Regarding the source of income, 50% of samples source income was pension.

In relation to knowledge about relaxation techniques, 30% of samples having knowledge about relaxation techniques.

In relation to source of information about relaxation techniques, 57% of samples source of information was mass media.

The findings of the study as per objectives are

The first objective was to assess the stress level among senior citizens

Stress before administration of relaxation techniques. 13% of the senior citizens are having mild stress level, 80% of them having moderate stress level, 7% of them are having highly perceived stress level.

A study which is conducted by **Mrs.Dalbirkaur** (2014) on laughter therapy among elderly people with stress. It is observed in pre test of experimental group 1 (3.3%), 0,29 (96.66%) subjects fall in mild, moderate, severe stress respectively. Control group has 1 (3.3%), 2 (6.6%) and 27 (90%) mild, moderate and severe level. In post test, there was no decrease level of stress among control group 1 (6.6%) moderate 29 (96.66%) severe whereas elderly people increased in moderate 16 (53.33%) and mild 9 (30%) as compared to pre test of experimental group after laughing session 20-25 minutes daily for 15 days. Only 5 (16.6%) elderly people remained in severe stress after laughter therapy. It shows that shifting of samples in various level of stress due to laughter therapy in experimental group only. (3)

The second objective was to compare the pre test and post test level of stress among senior citizens

The overall pre- test stress score among senior citizens was 58.1 with standard deviation of 12.36. And the post- test, they had scored 19.63 with standard deviation of 5.83. It is statistically significant. Difference between pre-test and post-test stress analysed by using paired t- test

A study which was conducted by **Shahidi at al** (2010) on laughter yoga versus group exercise program among elderly people with stress. A randomized controlled trial. He assessed effectiveness of laughter with geriatric stress score. Researcher has found that there was changes in stress score (reduced 38.88) that individual in both laughter therapy and exercise therapy group showed significant improvement in their score ($p < 0.001$) for laughter therapy versus control group and ($p < 0.01$) for exercise therapy versus control group. No significant difference between two experimental group ($p > 0.4$). To control the effectiveness of pre and post stress score. (4)

The third objective was to associate the post test of stress level among senior citizens with demographic variables

The level of stress is reduced with their demographic variables. Variables like religion, marital status, monthly income and source of information about relaxation techniques showed statistically significant association. A study which was conducted by **Mrs.Dalbir kaur** (2014) on laughter therapy among elderly people with stress. The association of stress and laughing with selected socio demographic variables such as age, gender, religion, marital status, type of family and economical support was statistically non-significant except gender, education and duration of stay in the pre -test of experimental group. It was found association with the laughing at the level of 5%

that is $2.52 > 1.960$ means females have more level of stress than male of the study sample. The experimental group has shown a dramatic change in the level of stress compared to control group by laughter therapy at selected old age home. (4)

Stress is a state of being under pressure. In modern usage stress refers to being under a great deal of emotional, mental and social pressure for a prolonged period of time. The aging process can be considered as stressful if they require the great deal of concentration for a continued period of time. Social environment and situation is also considered stressful if there is lot of obstacles to communication and mutual tolerance. There is only 24 hours per day so relaxation techniques is an efficient way to reduce stress in everyday life. It reprioritizes the goals and activities of the life which focuses on what is truly important and lets the trivial ones go. The researcher conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of relaxation techniques to reduce stress among elderly people in selected Old Age Home at Chennai. The data was collected for 4 weeks in selected Old Age Home, Chennai. The collected data was analyzed by using the descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (student paired t test and chi square test). The study findings were discussed based on the objectives.

The major findings of the study were as follows, In relation to age, 37% of the samples were in age group of 66- 70 years.

Regarding the gender, 80% of samples were female.

In relation to educational status, 27% of samples were high school education and graduates.

Regarding religion 70% of samples belong to Hindu religion.

Regarding the marital status, 87% of the samples were widow / widower.

In relation to monthly income, 40% of the samples monthly income was above Rs. 15000

Regarding the source of income, 50% of samples source income was pension.

In relation to knowledge about relaxation techniques, 30% of samples having knowledge about relaxation techniques.

In relation to source of information about relaxation techniques, 57% of samples source of information was mass media. (5)

The assessment of level of stress shows that 13% of the senior citizens are having mild stress level, 80% of them having moderate stress level, 7% of them are having highly perceived stress level.

Comparison of pre-test and post -test level of stress among senior citizens shows the overall pre- test stress score among senior citizens was 58.1 with standard deviation of 12.36. And the post- test, they had scored 19.63 with standard

deviation of 5.83. It is statistically significant. Difference between pre-test and post-test stress analysed by using paired t- test.

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6. Implication

The finding of the study has implications for nursing education, nursing practice, nursing research and nursing administration.

Nursing Education

Nursing curriculum focuses to develop skills in identifying the stress level and its management.

Conferences, workshops and seminars can be conducted for nurses to reduce stress and improve positive attitude. In-service education can be planned to update their knowledge regarding stress reduction measures or relaxation techniques.

Nursing Practice

Relaxation technique is one of the routine nursing interventions in reducing stress among senior citizens. Nurses can demonstrate the steps of relaxation techniques to senior citizens with stress and encourage them to practice it. Self-instructional material regarding relaxation techniques to reduce the stress which can be distributed to the people.

Nursing Research

Research can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of relaxation techniques among women. The study will be a valuable reference material for further researcher. The results of study encourage the management to adopt relaxation techniques for relieving stress.

Nursing Administration

Proposed to health administration to strategically plan and meet the health needs of risk group.

The administration both private and Govt sectors should take initiatives to relieve stress.

The administration can encourage the nurses for conducting research aspects for prevention of stress. The administration can organize conferences, workshops and seminars for nurses working in the hospital and other health care setting.

7. Recommendation

Keeping in view, the finding of the present study can be used as a guide for future research.

A similar study can be replicated with on a large sample in different setting

A similar study can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of other complimentary therapies on stress.

A longitudinal study can be undertaken to find out the long term effect of relaxation techniques on stress.

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