

Effectiveness of Art Therapy on Level of Anxiety among Hospitalized Children

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Abstract: Hospital can be a difficult place for the young children and its families. In hospitals, children may find strange faces, different routines, strange beds and equipment, limited family contact, unfamiliar surroundings, different smell, food and sounds. **Objectives:** To assess the existing level of anxiety among the children of experimental group and control group. To evaluate the effectiveness of art therapy on the level of anxiety among the children of experimental group. To compare the effectiveness of art therapy on the level of anxiety among the children of experimental group and control group. **Material and method:** Approach Interventional Design: quasi experimental pre-test post-test control group. Sample- 60 school age hospitalized children were selected using Non probability convenience sampling technique in the children of experimental group at selected hospitals of Wardha District. Tool- Modified Spence children anxiety scale. Results: The findings show that 17 (56.66 %) of the children in experimental group had severe anxiety in pretest and none of them had severe anxiety in post test. The mean score for experimental group SCAS were 60.43±5.39 and 27.07±8.03 whereas the mean score for control group SCAS were 55.50±9.35 and 55.10 ± 8.39. **Conclusion:** The study findings shows reduction in the level of anxiety after intervention i.e. art therapy. And nurses have to play important role to participate in art therapy in reducing the anxiety of hospitalized children.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Art therapy, Level of anxiety, Hospitalized children

1. Introduction

About 30 percent of children are hospitalized at least once during their childhood in the hospital; about 5 percent of them are hospitalized several times. Hospitalization is considered as a stressful event for children; the environment which surrounds the children in a hospital, physical conditions such as pain and underlying disease, hospital procedures such as blood tests or even a medical examination in the hospital could be a stressor for children. The stress in children can lead to sleep or appetite disorders and developmental disorders and it can delay the disease recovery process.

To reduce the effects of stress on admitted children, various methods such as reading stories and showing cartoons or games are used. Various studies have mentioned the physiological and psychological effects of music on hospitalized children. Because of the developmental differences in children, their stress is usually not expressed verbally, but it occurs as behavioural and psychological changes. Stress can be measured in children by different methods. There are many studies on clinical examinations in children, such as the heart rate variability reviews for this use. Many others use stress scales such as the Spielberger test.

Art therapy encompasses both preventive and curative activities and aims to improve ways of engaging those who might be reticent in seeking more traditional forms of psychological support offered through 'talking therapies'. The Longreach base of the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Queensland provides mental health support to people living in rural and remote locations in central western Queensland and has been complemented since 2006 by the addition of a full-time art therapist.

2. Need for the Study

The need for art therapy arises from inner difficulties, art therapy will terminate as the individual becomes less disturbed. In the adult artistic creation will usually cease at this point. Occasionally art therapy may awaken a dormant talent, and the student may continue to use art as a means of expression. But this development is beyond the field of art therapy and belongs to the realms of pure art.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the existing level of anxiety among the children of experimental group and control group.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of art therapy on the level of anxiety among the children of experimental group
- To compare the effectiveness of art therapy on the level of anxiety among the children of experimental group and control group.

Inclusion criteria

- Child hospitalized for 7 days or more
- Age group 6-12 yrs
- Both male and female hospitalized children

Exclusion criteria

- Children who are not willing to participate in this study
- Physically handicapped children
- Mentally disabled children

3. Review of Literature

An experimental study was conducted in Iran. The objective was to assess drawing as a measure for child's distress in pediatric dental settings. Fifty-four children, aged 4-11 years, participated in this study. The child was instructed to draw a picture of a person in a dental clinic. The pictures

were scored using CD:H score sheet and the findings were compared with SEM and Frankl scores. CD: H was correlated with both Frankl (correlation coefficient = -0.550) and SEM (correlation coefficient = +0.483) scales ($P < 0.001$). So Drawing is a useful measure of children's emotional status in dental settings in a way that is easier, familiar and more enjoyable for the child patient.

A comparative study was conducted in Finland. The purpose is to hospital children to assess the pain by using art therapy. This study aimed to examine how hospitalized children express pain through drawings, and was carried out by examining children's thematic drawings of pain. A comparison was made between hospitalized children and healthy control groups with respect to the thematic contents and cognitive and emotional characteristics of pain drawings. The drawings were sorted in categories on the basis of content and cognitive competence and emotional disturbances by the Draw-a-Person procedure. The hospitalized children showed a lower level of cognitive capacity than their healthy controls. The control group children revealed a higher level of emotional disturbance than the hospitalized children.

4. Methodology

Research approach: Interventional was used in this study,

Research design: Quasi experimental Pretest posttest control group design was used.

Research Setting: Selected hospitals of Wardha district. Hospitals included in the study were Acharya Vinoba Bhave

Rural hospital, Sawangi (Meghe), Wardha and Civil hospital, Wardha

Population: Population for the study was hospitalized school age children.

Sampling technique: Non probability convenience sampling technique.

Sample size: The study was conducted 60 sample school age hospitalized children.

Independent Variable: The independent variable in this study is art therapy

Dependent Variable: The dependent variable in this study is anxiety among hospitalized children

Inclusion Criteria

Those who are

- Child hospitalized for 7 days or more
- Age group 6-12 yrs
- Both male and female hospitalized children

Exclusion Criteria

- Children who are not willing to participate in this study
- Physically handicapped children
- Mentally disabled children

5. Results

Section I: Percentage distribution of subjects with regards to their demographic variables.

Table 1: Distribution of subjects with regards to their demographic variables

Demographic Variables	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
AGE				
6 – 7 yrs.	07	23.3%	06	20%
8 – 9 yrs.	07	23.3%	09	30%
10 – 11 yrs.	09	30%	09	30%
12 yrs.	07	23.3%	06	20%
SEX				
Male	16	53.3%	20	66.7%
Female	14	46.7%	10	33.3%
EDUCATION				
Primary	02	6.7%	01	3.3%
Secondary	05	16.7%	03	10%
Higher secondary	04	13.3%	13	43.3%
Graduate	11	36.7%	11	36.7%
Post Graduate	04	13.3%	01	3.3%
Any Other	04	13.3%	01	3.3%
OCCUPATION				
Housewife	05	16.7%	5	16.7%
Farming	05	16.7%	13	43.3%
Government employee	12	40%	06	20%
Private employee	08	26.7%	06	20%
RELIGION				
Hindu	23	76.7%	24	80%
Muslim	01	3.3%	03	10%
Christian	03	10%	01	3.3%
Others	03	10%	02	6.7%
Frequency of hospitalization				
1	04	13.3%	09	30%
2	16	53.3%	12	40%
3	08	26.7%	06	20%
4	02	6.7%	03	10%

Section II: Assessment of existing level of anxiety among the children of experimental group and control group.

Assessment of anxiety in experimental group shows that none of the children were having mild anxiety in pretest whereas 21 (70%) were having mild anxiety in posttest, 13 (43.33 %) had moderate anxiety in pretest and 09 (30 %) of them had moderate anxiety in posttest, 17 (56.66 %) had severe anxiety in pretest and none of them had severe anxiety in post test. The minimum score in pre test was 53 and the maximum score was 78. The minimum score in posttest was 15 and the maximum score was 53. The mean score in pretest was 60.43 ± 5.39 with a mean percentage score of 67.14 ± 5.99 . The mean score in posttest was 27.07 ± 8.03 with a mean percentage score of 30.07 ± 8.92 . Assessment of anxiety in control group shows that none of the children were having mild anxiety in pretest and posttest, 20 (66.66 %) had moderate anxiety in pretest and 21 (70 %) of them had moderate anxiety in posttest, 10 (33.33 %) had

severe anxiety in pretest and 9 (30 %) of them had severe anxiety in posttest.

Section III: Analysis of the effectiveness of art therapy on the level of anxiety among the children of experimental group and control group.

Evaluation of effectiveness of art therapy on the level of anxiety among hospitalized children. The calculated 't' value (26.16) of experimental group is higher than the tabulated 't' value (2.045) at 5% level of significance. There is statistically significant decrease on the level of anxiety in post test of the experimental group at the level of $P < 0.05$. The calculated 't' value (1.263) of control group is lower than the tabulated 't' value (2.045) at 5% level of significance. There is not significant decrease on the level of anxiety in post test of the control group at the level of $P > 0.05$.

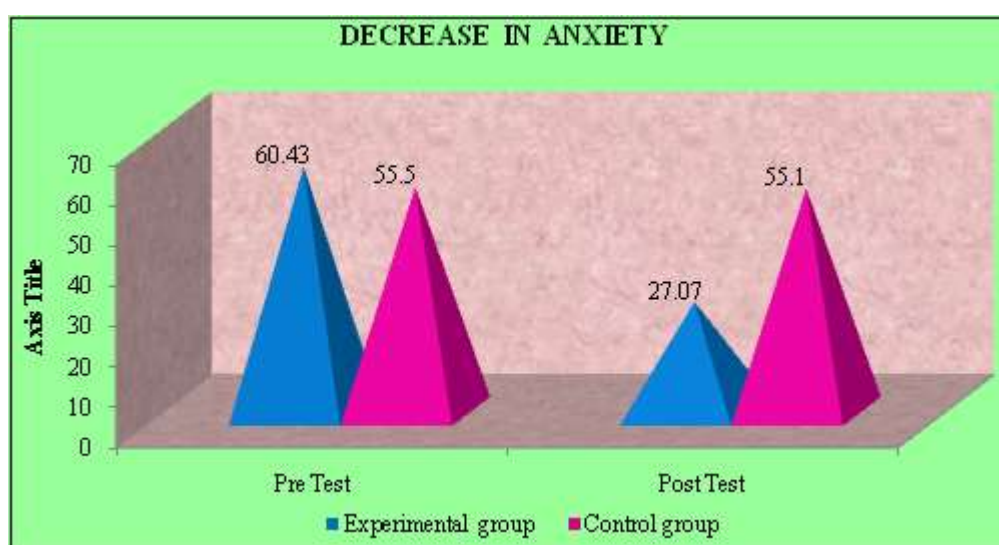


Figure 1: Comparison of pre test and post test anxiety of experimental group and control group

6. Nursing Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have implications for nursing administration, nursing education, nursing research and nursing practice.

a) Nursing Administration

- Findings of the study can be used by the Nursing Administrator in creating policies and plans for providing art therapy in hospitals. This will contribute to reduce fear of children, gain co-operation and early healing of illness.

b) Nursing Education

- The nursing students develop an insight about art therapy and implement the knowledge of the same while dealing with pediatric clients.
- This study will help the nursing students in improving knowledge and skill regarding modification of scale.

c) Nursing Research

- The nurse researchers can use the findings of this study as baseline data to conduct further interventional research to identify the level of anxiety and to determine the association of other demographic variable as type of family and history of operations with the anxiety score.

d) Nursing Practice

- Art therapy will help to improve the interpersonal relationship between nurse and the children.
- The study findings will help nursing personnel to understand about necessity of providing in-service education programme.

7. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, it is recommended that the following studies can be conducted:

- A similar study on a large scale including hospitals across the country can be carried out in order to estimate the level of anxiety regarding hospitalization for generalization of findings.
- A comparative study can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of art therapy versus play therapy.

8. Conclusion

After the detailed analysis, this study leads to the following conclusion: The calculated 't' value (26.16) of experimental group is higher than the tabulated 't' value (2.045) at 5% level of significance. There is statistically significant

decrease on the level of anxiety in post test of the experimental group at the level of $P < 0.05$. As the study findings revealed that the majority of the hospitalized children of experimental group have severe anxiety before intervention whereas after intervention majority of group had mild anxiety. The study findings shows reduction in the level of anxiety after intervention i.e. art therapy. And nurses have to play important role to participate in art therapy in reducing the anxiety of hospitalized children.

Famous psychologist Nathaniel Branden says, **“Fear should be treated as signals not to close our eyes but to open them wider”**.

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