

EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED RELAXATION TECHNIQUES TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF STRESS AMONG ELDERLY PEOPLE

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Introduction

“Aging is a natural experience not a pathological process”

“Good health is the pre requisite for good quality of life, adding life to years”

- WHO (2007)

The aging of the global population is one of the biggest challenges facing the world in the next few decades. At any age, stress is a part of life, young and old alike have to face difficult situations and overcome obstacles. With increasing age, people are more susceptible to physical, psychological, social and emotional problems. The body's natural relaxation response is a powerful antidote to stress. The healing strategy such as yoga therapy and some relaxation techniques may helpful in improving their QOL in terms of reducing stress.

Need for the study

According to Census report of Tamilnadu (2001), in India the total number of population above 60 years of age group is 77 million. In Tamilnadu, the total population above the age group of 60 years is 55,07,400. Among them 32,22,748 of elderly people are living in rural area and 22,84,652 of elderly people are living in urban areas.

The Madras Institute of aging survey (1995) also reported that the number of elderly living in old age homes in India are 21,214 and 3,876 in Tamilnadu. Sreevani (2005) stated, many older adults undergo painful life-style changes including retirement and relocation, loss of spouses, friends and at time even children. These stressful events may lead to

depression or may worsen existing mental and physical illnesses. Many studies conducted to compare the QOL (Quality Of Life) and emotional well-being of elderly in old age home vs staying in family found that QOL score was lower among elderly people living in old age home.

Objectives

1. To assess the existing level of stress among elderly people.
2. To find out the effectiveness of selected relaxation techniques in reducing the level of stress among elderly people.
3. To find out the association between the post test level of stress and their selected demographic variables

Projected outcome

Practicing selected relaxation techniques regularly can improve psychological well being among elderly people which in turn improve their QOL. Developing positive attitude towards practicing selected relaxation techniques will make elderly to initiate others also to practice.

Methodology

Design: Quasi experimental with one group pre-test post-test design
Setting: Selected old age homes in Chennai, Study population: Elderly people in old age homes in Chennai.
Sample: 60 elderly people, Sampling technique: Convenient sampling technique.
Tool: Modified stress assessment rating scale was used to assess the level of stress

INCLUSION CRITERIA

The elderly people who are

- Above 55 years of age in both sexes.
- Willing to participate in the study.
- Available during data collection period.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Having disturbances in memory.
- Chronically ill
- Having disease conditions which restricts the activity eg: High B.P., Heart disease etc.
- Having hearing loss, blindness and not having hearing aids.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

Section I

Demographic data that is Age, Sex, education, duration of residing in old age home, no. of children, reason for residing in old age home, supportive system and spirituality.

Section II

Modified stress assessment rating scale to assess the level of stress. It is a 4-point rating scale which consists of 50 items. Total score was 150.

SCORE INTERPRETATION

LEVEL OF STRESS	SCORES
<input type="checkbox"/> Low level of stress	< 50
<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate level of stress	51 – 100
<input type="checkbox"/> High level of stress	101 – 150

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Initially the researcher obtained written consent from the participants and the in charge of the old age home. First 4 days were utilized for pre test. Each day 15 samples were interviewed and data was collected. After that samples were gathered in one place where the selected relaxation techniques were explained through the prepared CD and laptop by the investigator and the elderly people were instructed to repeat the procedure and

corrections were made in practice. From the day 5th to 25th the intervention was given to the participants. The group was divided into 4 sub groups. Morning and evening time was utilized for intervention. The respondents were encouraged to practice in the early morning also. Pranayama therapy was given daily for 20 min, aerobic exercise was demonstrated for 3 days per week for 20 min. Post test was conducted from 26th to 29th day.

DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL METHODS USED

- Descriptive statistics was used to assess the level of stress among elderly people.
- Chi Square test was used to analyze the association between the level of stress and their selected demographic variable.

Major findings of the study

- Demographic variables reveals that majority 36(60%) between the age group of 70-75 years, 31(52%) were male and 29(48%) were females, 39(65%) of them didn't have any formal education, majority 46(77%) were staying in the old age home around 5 years, 25(42%) had more than one child and 15 (25%) didn't have any issues, half of the subjects 30(50%) were residing in old age home due to abuse and neglected by the children, 22(37%) got support from their family members where as 18(30%) didn't get any sort of support, almost all the elderly were following spiritual practices that increases their coping mechanism to let out their stress.
- In the pre test 9(15%) had high level of stress where as in the post test none of them had high level. Moreover, in the pre test majority 47(78%) had moderate level of stress and 4(7%) had low level. However in the post test similar number 30(50%) had moderate as well as low level of stress.
- The result revealed that selected relaxation therapies (pranayama, aerobic exercises) were effective

($p < 0.05$) in reducing the stress among elderly people.

- There is a significant association between the post test level of stress and supportive system ($P < 0.05$). It predicts that along with stress reduction techniques a good supportive system is helpful in reducing the stress among elderly people.
- But there is no significant association between the post test level of stress and other demographic variables.

Implications

NURSING SERVICE

- Elderly people must be encouraged to participate in relaxation techniques.
- Nurse as the change agent, can introduce the various relaxation techniques to improve the health status of the elderly people.

NURSING EDUCATION

- Imparting the concepts of selected relaxation techniques to nursing students.
- Nursing students can utilize knowledge on selected relaxation technique to give health education in the schools, hospitals and community.

NURSING ADMINISTRATION

- Nursing personnel can organize continuing nursing education program on selected relaxation technique in all health sectors.

NURSING RESEARCH

- The study findings can effectively be utilized by the emerging researchers.

Recommendations

- The same study can be conducted to compare the effectiveness of relaxation techniques on stress among institutionalized and non institutionalized elderly people.

- The study can be conducted using control group.
- It can be conducted in a large scale in order to generalize the findings.

Conclusion

The present study assessed the effectiveness of selected relaxation techniques in reducing the level of stress among elderly people in old age home. The results showed that 78% had moderate level of stress in pre test was reduced to 50% level of stress in post test. The study concluded that the selected relaxation techniques were effective in reducing the level of stress among elderly people. Therefore they can be used to improve the psychological wellbeing of the elderly people residing in old age homes.

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