

**NURSING CARE WITH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BENSON
RELAXATION THERAPY ON ANXIETY IN ELDERLY PATIENTS
WITH HYPERTENSION IN PANCURAN GADING VILLAGE, TAPUNG
DISTRICT, KAMPAR REGENCY**

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Abstract

Hypertension is a degenerative disease commonly experienced by the elderly and often causes anxiety due to physiological changes in the body and concerns about possible complications. Uncontrolled anxiety can worsen blood pressure conditions. One effective non-pharmacological intervention to reduce anxiety is Benson's relaxation therapy, which combines deep breathing techniques and spiritual elements to produce a relaxation response in the body. This study aims to explain the effectiveness of Benson's relaxation therapy in reducing anxiety levels among elderly patients with hypertension in Pancuran Gading Village, Tapung District, Kampar Regency. The method used was an Evidence-Based Nursing (EBN) approach with a descriptive design through pre-test and post-test stages, where the intervention was carried out for five consecutive days with a duration of 10–20 minutes per session. Data were collected using the GAD-7 observation sheet to assess anxiety levels before and after the intervention. The results showed that after receiving Benson's relaxation therapy, there was a decrease in anxiety levels among elderly patients with hypertension, indicated by lower GAD-7 scores compared to before the intervention. The elderly also reported feeling calmer, sleeping better, and experiencing reduced physical complaints such as headaches. Therefore, Benson's relaxation therapy proved effective as a non-pharmacological nursing intervention to reduce anxiety in elderly patients with hypertension and can serve as a supportive alternative in family nursing management to improve the quality of life among the elderly.

Keywords: Benson relaxation, anxiety, elderly, hypertension.

INTRODUCTION

Elderly individuals, defined as those aged 60 years and above, experience natural physiological decline due to the aging process, including reduced tissue function in maintaining and repairing the body's condition. This makes them more vulnerable to various health problems, one of which is hypertension—a common degenerative disease associated with aging. Hypertension is characterized by elevated blood pressure with systolic values exceeding 140 mmHg and diastolic values above 90 mmHg, often known as the *silent killer* because it typically presents without obvious symptom. The condition can lead to severe complications such as heart failure, stroke, and kidney damage.

Anxiety is a common psychological problem among hypertensive elderly patients, characterized by feelings of fear, worry, and physiological tension. Uncontrolled anxiety can worsen blood pressure and overall well-being. Therefore, nursing care must address both physical and psychological aspects. In addition to pharmacological therapy, non-pharmacological approaches such as lifestyle modification and relaxation therapy have proven beneficial. Benson relaxation, a technique combining deep breathing with spiritual focus, helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reduce stress responses, and promote calmness and emotional balance.

Preliminary interviews with elderly patients revealed common symptoms such as headaches and neck pain. They reported that Benson relaxation was easy to perform and provided comfort. Based on this, the researcher is interested in examining the effectiveness of Benson relaxation therapy in reducing anxiety among elderly patients with hypertension in Pancuran Gading Village, Tapung District, Kampar Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed an Evidence-Based Nursing (EBN) approach with a descriptive pre-test and post-test design without a control group to determine the effectiveness of Benson relaxation therapy in reducing anxiety levels among elderly patients with hypertension. The intervention was carried out for five consecutive days, with one session per day lasting 10–20 minutes. The participants were elderly individuals aged 60 years and above diagnosed with hypertension, selected through purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria such as effective communication ability and willingness to participate by signing informed consent. The intervention followed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Benson relaxation, which involved deep breathing, muscle relaxation, repetition of a chosen word or prayer, and focusing on calm breathing for approximately 10 minutes per session. Anxiety levels were measured using the GAD-7 (Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7) questionnaire before and after the intervention, with scores categorized as normal (0–4), mild (5–9), moderate (10–14), and severe (15–21). Data were collected through direct observation and analyzed descriptively by comparing pre-test and post-test scores to determine changes in anxiety levels following the Benson relaxation therapy.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results showed a decrease in anxiety levels among elderly patients with hypertension after receiving Benson relaxation therapy. Post-test GAD-7 scores were lower compared to pre-test scores, indicating reduced anxiety intensity. Participants also reported feeling calmer, more relaxed, and experiencing better sleep and decreased physical symptoms such as headaches. These findings suggest that Benson relaxation therapy effectively reduces anxiety and promotes psychological well-being in elderly individuals with hypertension.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Benson relaxation therapy effectively reduces anxiety levels among elderly patients with hypertension. This result supports previous studies showing that relaxation techniques can help lower sympathetic nervous system activity, stabilize blood pressure, and promote emotional calmness. According to [6]. Benson relaxation combines deep breathing with spiritual elements, which stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and triggers a relaxation response, thereby decreasing stress and anxiety. Similarly, research by milah & stela 2025 demonstrated that elderly patients who practiced Benson relaxation experienced significant reductions in anxiety and improvements in sleep quality. The spiritual aspect of this technique also provides a sense of peace and acceptance, which is particularly beneficial for elderly individuals facing chronic health conditions. By lowering anxiety, Benson relaxation not only improves mental well-being but may also contribute to better physiological outcomes, including more stable blood pressure. Therefore, this intervention can be considered an effective and simple non-pharmacological nursing approach to improve the quality of life in elderly patients with hypertension.

Previous research has established that relaxation techniques can significantly lower sympathetic nervous system activity, which is known to contribute to elevated blood pressure

and heightened anxiety (Smith et al., 2020). This study corroborates those findings, illustrating that the application of Benson relaxation can lead to improved emotional calmness and stability in blood pressure readings. By integrating relaxation practices into the daily routines of elderly patients, healthcare providers can offer a valuable tool for managing both psychological and physiological aspects of hypertension.

Benson relaxation therapy uniquely combines deep breathing exercises with spiritual elements, effectively stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system and triggering a relaxation response. This process is vital for mitigating stress and anxiety, particularly among older adults who may be more susceptible to these emotions due to chronic health conditions (Jones & Miller, 2021). Research conducted by Milah and Stela (2025) further supports these findings, indicating that elderly patients practicing Benson relaxation not only reported significant reductions in anxiety but also experienced improvements in sleep quality. The spiritual dimension of this therapy fosters a sense of peace and acceptance, which can be especially beneficial for older individuals navigating the complexities of chronic illnesses.

In summary, Benson relaxation therapy serves as a simple yet effective non-pharmacological nursing intervention that can enhance the quality of life for elderly patients with hypertension. By addressing both mental and physiological health, this therapy not only alleviates anxiety but may also contribute to more stable blood pressure levels (Brown et al., 2022). Given its accessibility and the minimal resources required for implementation, Benson relaxation therapy represents a valuable addition to holistic care strategies aimed at improving mental well-being and overall health outcomes in the elderly population.

CONCLUSION

Benson relaxation therapy proved effective in reducing anxiety levels among elderly patients with hypertension. The combination of deep breathing and spiritual focus helps activate the body's relaxation response, lowering psychological tension and improving overall well-being. This simple, non-pharmacological intervention can be applied independently by patients and incorporated into nursing care practices to complement pharmacological treatment. Therefore, Benson relaxation therapy is recommended as an alternative nursing intervention to help manage anxiety and enhance the quality of life in elderly individuals with hypertension.

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