



THE EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE REDUCES THE ANXIETY OF THE ELDERLY WITH HYPERTENSION

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ABSTRACT

One of the aging processes that experienced by the elderly in cardiovascular system health problems is hypertension. A relatively long treatment and recovery cause anxiety. The emotional freedom technique is a non-pharmacological method for dealing with anxiety. To find out the effect of the emotional freedom technique on the anxiety level in elderly with anxiety. Method: Research design is a pretest and posttest quasi-experiment with a control group. This study was conducted in Sragen village area. The sampling technique used purposive sampling. The total sampling is 144 respondents, divided into two groups namely 72 respondents of a treatment group and 72 respondents of the control group. The tool of the study was a questionnaire of Hamilton Rating Scale for Anxiety to rate the level of anxiety experienced by elderly with hypertension. The data were analyzed by using Wilcoxon test and Mann Whitney test. Wilcoxon test showed $p\text{ value } 0.000 < 0,0$, there was a significant effect on the anxiety level of the elderly with hypertension and Mann-Whitney test obtained $p\text{ value } 0.042$, showing that the group given the emotional freedom technique treatment was effective in reducing the anxiety level compared to the control group. Emotional freedom technique is effective to reduce the anxiety level of elderlies with hypertension.

Keywords: anxiety; elderly; emotional freedom technique; hypertension

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INTRODUCTION

The aging process in the elderly is characterized by the gradual disappearance of the ability system to maintain its normal function (Maryam, 2018). The aging process in the elderly would have various physical and psychological issues including cardiovascular system change (Desta et al, 2019). The change in the cardiovascular system causes stroke and heart disease (Papalia, E, 2014). Untreated hypertension could reduce the elderly's quality of life (Lewa, 2010).

World Health Organization (WHO) reported that there were 17 million people who died every year due to hypertension (Depkes, 2016). In Indonesia, the hypertension prevalence in 2018 was 658.201 people. The population in Central Java who has hypertension was 89.648 people from 34 provinces in Indonesia (Risksedas, 2018). Pharmacology therapy with a doctor's prescription like diazepam 2mg three times a day causes a high level of drug and adverse side effects (Sonu et all, 2016). Drug side effects in the elderly are headache, weak, drowse that reducing concentration, and bone density (Kristanti, 2015).

The elderly with hypertension could have a psychological change, which is anxiety that requires a long treatment and could not be recovered, it might shorten life. As a result, excessive worry, loss of income, position, and role arise (Hidayati et al., 2020). Anxiety occurs because of the fear of death. Moreover, pessimism to be recovered will enhance the anxiety and the feeling of giving up on the situation (Ridwan, Dyah & Widodo, 2017). Based on that, it requires an attempt to cope with the anxiety in the elderly with hypertension.

The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy gives relaxation response because the meridian points beat in the body could stimulate endorphin for producing serotonin and dopamine. The function of endorphin in nerve cell synapses could lead to a decrease in psychological symptoms particularly anxiety (Purba, 2010). The tapping movement with hands at certain points which are nine points, including top of the head, eyebrow, side of the eye, under the eye, under the nose, between the chin and the lip bottom, the end of the sternum, under the armpit, and nipples around 20 minutes every day in a week (Oktiawati et al., 2020).

The tapping is done thirty times on the meridian points while saying the perceived problems could neutralize the emotional disorder or the perceived pain (Zainudin.A.F, 2018). *Emotional Freedom Technique* is a therapy using light tapping that could give calmness, convenience, and positive thoughts (Afriyanti & Wenni, 2018). The preliminary study result in Sragen Village area found that the average blood pressure was $\geq 150/90$ mmHg – $197/90$ mmHg. The elderly revealed that their hypertension causes them experiencing anxiety with anxious symptoms, feel something might happen like death and insomnia. In addition, the elderly tends to require a very long treatment so as there is an excessive worry in the treatment because the disease does not recover and even gets worse. The purpose of the study is to effect of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) therapy on the anxiety level of the elderly with hypertension.

METHODS

The type of this study is Quasy experiment. The design is pretest and posttest with control groups. This study was conducted in Sragen Village area from April- May 2021. The sampling technique was purposive sampling and obtained 144 respondents who are divided into two groups, namely 72 respondents for the treatment group and 72 respondents for the control group. The treatment group was given the Emotional Freedom Technique by giving the tapping movement with hand on nine meridian points. They were top of the head, eyebrow, side of the eye, under the eye, under the nose, between the chin and the lip bottom, the end of the sternum, under the armpit, and under the nipples for 20 minutes. Otherwise, the control group was given dzikir therapy for ten minutes. The effect of the treatment was rated by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores (Dharma, 2011).

The research instrument used *Hamilton Rating Scale for Anxiety*, consisting of fourteen questions to measure the anxiety level with answer choices 0 =none, 1: mild, 2: moderate, 3: severe, 4: very severe. The score < 14: no anxiety, score 14-20: mild anxiety, score 21-27: moderate level of anxiety, score 28-41: severe level of anxiety, score 42-56: panic. Instrument *Hamilton Rating Scale for Anxiety* has a validity test value with r count $0.478-0.739 > 0.361$ and reliability test $0.839 > 0.75$ (Yochim et al., 2011). The data analysis was univariant and bivariant with Wilcoxon test and Mann Whitney test. Before collecting the data, the researcher conducted an Ethical Clearance (EC) in KusumaHusadaUniversitySurakartawith number072/UKH.L.02/EC/V/2021.

RESULTS

Tabel 1.
Respondent Gender (n= 144)

Gender	Treatment		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Male	32	44,4	30	41,7
Female	40	55,6	42	58,3

The result of this study reveals that the most dominant respondents in the treatment group are female which is 40 respondents (55,6%) and the control group is 42 respondents (58,3%) whereas the male respondents are only 32 respondents (44,4%) in the treatment group and 30 respondents (41,7%) in the control group.

Table 2.
The effect of *Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)* and Dzikir therapy on the anxiety of the elderly with hypertension (n=144)

Variable	Sig	Pvalue
Pre-test and post-test treatment	-7,382 ^b	0,000
Pre-test and post-test Control	-7,391 ^b	0,000

The result of the study indicates that p value is $0,000 < 0,05$, which means that there is an effect of the *Emotional Freedom Technique* on the anxiety level of the elderly with hypertension.

Table 3.
The analysis of the difference between *Emotional Freedom Technique* and Dzikir Therapy on the anxiety of the elderly with hypertension (n=144)

Variable	Mean	SD	Pvalue
Treatment	-7,625	4,701	0,042
Control	-5,861	2,596	

The result shows p value $0,042 < 0,05$, there is a significant difference in reducing the anxiety between the treatment group and the control group.

DISCUSSION

The result shows that the most dominant respondents in the treatment group are female which is 40 respondents (55,6%) and the control group is 42 respondents (58,3%). The study of Kati et al., 2018 stated that the level of anxiety of the elderly is most experienced by the female which is 49 respondents (62,8%). It is related to the hormonal factor. When going through menopause, the woman is protected from cardiovascular disease because estrogen prevents damage to a blood vessel. The role of estrogen can protect the vein. If the estrogen level is decreased, there would be a reduction of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and increasing of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) (Nuraini, 2015). The elderly females particularly have the psychosocial factor that could affect anxiety, including excessive worry about their hypertension which tends to require a long treatment because the older they are, the more difficult it to be recovered, death fearing of themselves (Wigati & Kulsum, 2017). The result of the researcher analysis indicates that in terms of physiological factors, the elderly females have had a menopausal cycle and in terms of psychological, they have anxiety, worry, and fear of death. As a result, the female has a higher risk of hypertension than the man.

The result of the study also indicates that there is an effect of the *Emotional Freedom Technique* on the anxiety level of the elderly with hypertension ($p\text{ value } 0,000 < 0,05$). The control group who gets Dzikir therapy resulting anxiety reduction because dzikir could clear and neutralize the mind, and improve the personality. An earnest dzikir might lead an individual to be in a quiet and comfortable situation (Novy, 2018). Another researcher (Setyani.N.F, 2018) considered that dzikir therapy influences to anxiety reduction of the elderly in PantiWerda. According to Nurlina (2019), dzikir therapy could reduce the anxiety on the patients in pre and post-operation.

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a light tapping therapy on the meridian points in the body (Ningsih.S.F, Karin.D, 2015). The study of Patriyani & Rahayu, 2018 reveals *Emotional Freedom Technique* can reduce anxiety in a degenerative disease condition. *The emotional Freedom Technique* affects negative mental conditions so as inflicting comfortable conditions and reducing anxiety (Haruyama.S, 2013). Another study shows that there is an effect of giving *Emotional Freedom Technique* therapy on the anxiety of CKD patients (Dewi.T.P.N, 2021). *Emotional Freedom Technique* (EFT) can affect the sending of impulses and stimuli of the limbic system located in the hypothalamus so that the release of *metenfealin*, *dinofin*, and *βendofin* generates a relaxed feeling that might cause a decrease blood pressure as well as anxiety (Teti & Paulus, 2013).

This study result shows a significant difference in reducing anxiety between the treatment and the control group ($p\text{value } 0,042 < 0,05$). *The emotional Freedom Technique* (EFT) that is carried out on the tapping points can minimize emotional disorder. It is proved from the pre and post-test scores showing the anxiety level of moderate anxiety becomes mild anxiety. According to the researcher, the *Emotional Freedom Technique* (EFT) is effective in reducing anxiety in the elderly with hypertension because the light tapping can stimulate the release of endorphin and bonding with the opioid receptor in the neuron that inhibits the release of neurotransmitters causing the physical and psychological condition to be more relax.

CONCLUSIONS

This study indicates that the *Emotional Freedom Technique* (EFT) is effective in reducing the anxiety level of the elderly with hypertension.

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