



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HYPNOTHERAPY IN REDUCING STRESS, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION IN PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (PLWHA): A SCOPING REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) may experience psychological issues such as stress, anxiety and depression. This impacts the behavior of PLWHA, who may hide their HIV status, fear taking HIV tests, and delay treatment. Hypnotherapy is one of the non-pharmacological interventions that effective for stress, anxiety and depression. Objective: to summarize or compile the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Method: literature sources were obtained through searches in the ProQuest, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar databases. The articles used were articles that had been published from 2015 to 2024. The keywords used for the search included HIV/AIDS, hypnotherapy, hypnosis, depression, anxiety, and stress. A total of 5913 articles were found. The articles obtained were then analyzed according to the inclusion criteria to determine differences and duplications. A diagram for a visual representation of how the search and selection of articles was carried out is shown in the PRISMA-SR flow diagram. Data extraction was done by creating a table. Result: the researchers identified five articles related to the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). There were several interventions, such as hypnotherapy, a combination of hypnosis with caring, and a combination of mindfulness-based spiritual cognitive therapy with hypnosis. Conclusions: all hypnotherapy interventions, as well as the combined hypnotherapy approaches, have been proven effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

Keywords: anxiety; depression; HIV/AIDS; hypnosis; hypnotherapy; stress

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INTRODUCTION

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that spreads through certain body fluids and attacks the immune system. Over time, HIV can destroy so many other cells that the body cannot fight off infections and diseases (CDC, 2019). The advanced progression of this infection can lead to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The cases of HIV/AIDS have become a global health issue, resulting in a death toll of 40.1 million people (UNAIDS, 2024). In 2021, approximately 1.5 million individuals were infected with HIV, and 650,000 cases resulted in death due to AIDS. The highest number of deaths from HIV/AIDS is in Africa, with 25.6 million sufferers, including 20.6 million (53%) in East and Southern Africa, and 5 million (13%) in West and Central Africa (Moyo et al., 2023). Asia and the Pacific follow with 6 million sufferers (15%) (Green et al., 2021). Western and Central Europe, as well as North America, have the lowest numbers, with 2.3 million sufferers (5%) (Gökengin et al., 2016).

People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) may experience various issues, including anxiety and depression (Ji et al., 2024). Both of these can occur at all stages of HIV infection, and this state of stress can worsen the condition of PLWHA (Soan et al., 2023). The global incidence of depression among PLWHA is estimated to reach 350 million (Gebru et al., 2024). Stigma and discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are widespread, resulting in a deterioration of both the physical and psychological conditions of PLWHA (Wilandika et al., 2022). This impacts the behavior of PLWHA, who may hide their HIV status, fear taking HIV tests, and delay treatment (Fauk et al., 2021). There are two types of treatments for anxiety disorders experienced by PLWHA: pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments. Pharmacological treatment involves the administration of medications as prescribed by a doctor, while non-pharmacological treatment includes interventions such as distraction, progressive relaxation, meditation, and hypnosis (Amaniti et al., 2019). A scoping review found that hypnotherapy is effective in reducing depression (Pang et al., 2024). Other study found that hypnotherapy effective in reducing anxiety disorder (Pournezhai et al., 2022). Hypnotherapy also is an effective treatment for managing stress and insomnia (Sharma & Tiwari, 2022).

There are several methods besides hypnotherapy used to address stress, anxiety, and depression, but these methods are less effective and take a long time to yield significant changes. This is because other methods do not address the root of the problem and only touch on the level of conscious thought (Yulienugroho et al., 2022). Based on that background, it can be concluded that the use of hypnotherapy can alleviate and find solutions to the psychological burdens experienced by PLWHA. Thus, the depression, anxiety, and stress experienced by PLWHA can be reduced. The objective of this scoping review is to summarize or compile the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a scoping review. The purpose of this scoping review is to identify, describe, and map the findings related to a specific research topic. The steps for conducting a scoping review follow the five stages outlined in the framework by Arksey & O'Malley, which are: 1) identifying the research question, 2) identifying relevant research, 3) selecting studies, 4) charting/mapping the data, and 5) summarizing and reporting the results (Winardi & Musak, 2021).

Stage 1: Identifying the Research Question

The research question for this study is: "Is hypnotherapy effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)?"

Stage 2: Identifying Relevant Research

The articles utilized to compile this scoping review are related to the effects of hypnotherapy on stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The inclusion criteria for selecting articles are as follows: 1) respondents diagnosed with HIV/AIDS who are experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression; 2) articles written in English; 3) quantitative research; 4) published between 2015 until 2024; and 5) research articles, original articles, and available in full text. The literature sources were obtained through searches using the ProQuest, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar databases. The keywords employed in the search included HIV/AIDS, hypnotherapy, hypnosis, depression, anxiety, and stress. The search for articles considered the title, abstract, interventions, and methodologies employed.

Stage 3: Selecting Studies

Initially, articles were identified to select relevant studies. The identification procedure involved: 1) Article published between 2015-2024 included and not full text article removed; 2) Article written in English and Not research articles removed; 3) removed duplicated article; 4) reviewing the research topics and selecting articles related to hypnosis for stress, depression, and anxiety in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA); 5) examining the authors of the articles; 6) checking the journal names, volume, issue, and year of publication; and 7) reviewing the abstracts.

Stage 4: Charting and Mapping the Data

The identified articles were charted into a data flow diagram to illustrate the process of searching and selecting articles. The flow diagram was created using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-SR). Data extraction was performed by creating a table that included the names of several authors, publication year, title, intervention, research design, sample, and research findings. The purpose of creating the data extraction table was to facilitate the authors in outlining the review results.

Stage 5: Summarizing and Reporting the Results

This study was summarized descriptively, comparing the reviewed articles. The summary focused on significant and non-significant findings, issues addressed, intervention methods, and respondents. This stage aims to clearly present the overall findings, offering insights into the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in patients with HIV/AIDS.

RESULT

The researchers identified five articles related to the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Based on the findings from these articles, it was determined that both hypnotherapy interventions and combined hypnotherapy approaches were effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The reviewed articles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Results of the Research Review (n=5)

Nu.	Author and Year	Title	Intervention	Design and Sample	Research Finding
1.	Dian Permatasari, Iva Gamar, Dian Pratiwi, Eko Mulyadi, Dian Ika Puspitasari. (2023)	Hypnocaring as a Support Model for Reducing Stress Levels in People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLHIV)	Hypnocaring (combination of hypnosis and caring)	Quasi-experimental study, one group pre-post-test design. Sample of 30 respondents living with HIV/AIDS.	Hypnocaring is effective in reducing stress in patients with HIV/AIDS (Permatasari et al., 2023)
2.	Eny Pujiati, Meidiana Dwidiyanti, Muchlis Achsan Udji Sofro, Muhammad Hussein Gasem. (2022)	The Effectiveness of Combination Mindfulness Spiritual-Based Cognitive Therapy plus Hypnosis vs Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy on Depression Scores and Cortisol Levels in HIV Patients with Depression: A Randomized Controlled Trial	Combination Mindfulness Spiritual-Based Cognitive Therapy plus Hypnosis vs Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy	Randomized controlled trial, pre-post-test with control group. Sample of 62 respondents with HIV.	Hypnosis combined with Mindfulness Spiritual-Based Cognitive Therapy was found to be more effective in reducing depression compared to Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. (Pujiati et al., 2022)
3.	Hesti Wiji Utami, Wiwin Mintarsih, Nita Nurvita. (2021)	The Effect of Hypnosis on The Level of Anniversary of Women With HIV/AIDS	Hypnosis	Pre-experimental study, one group pre-post-test design. Sample of 19 women with HIV/AIDS.	Hypnosis was shown to be effective in reducing anxiety levels in women with HIV/AIDS. (Utami & Mintarsih, 2021)
4.	Ahmad Wasis Setyadi, Astri Yunita. (2018)	The Effect of Hypnotherapy to the Changes of Stress Level to ODHA (person who has been diagnosed HIV/AIDS) in the KDS Friendship Plus Kediri	Hypnotherapy	Randomized controlled trial, pre-post-test with control group. Sample of 60 individuals living with HIV/AIDS.	Hypnotherapy was found to be effective in reducing stress levels in individuals living with HIV/AIDS. (Setyadi & Yunita, 2018)
5.	Ahmad Wasis Setyadi, Bhisma Murti, Argyo Demartoto. (2016)	The Effect of Hypnotherapy on Depression, Anxiety, and Stress, in People Living with HIV/AIDS, in "Friendship Plus" Peer Supporting Group, in Kediri, East Java	Hypnotherapy	Randomized controlled trial, pre-post-test with control group. Sample of 60 individuals living with HIV/AIDS.	Hypnotherapy was found to be effective in reducing depression, anxiety, and stress in individuals living with HIV/AIDS. (Setyadi et al., 2016)

DISCUSSION

Patients living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) often experience stress, which is a significant consequence of social stigma, discrimination, isolation, and health problems. This impact is referred to as psychological stress and can affect the quality of life of patients. PLWHA experiencing psychological stress may exhibit various symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders (Danti & Gayatri, 2021). Depression is the leading cause of disability in developed countries, ranking second in the global disease burden in 2020, and is predicted to become the primary cause of global disease burden by 2030 (Schrecker, 2017). In the context

of HIV, depression is a condition that is often unrecognized and can affect quality of life, adherence to medical care, survival, and even suicidal behavior. Approximately 800,000 people die by suicide each year (UNAIDS, 2022). Depression in PLWHA is associated with poor quality of life, additional comorbidities, disability, and unemployment, and is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among PLWHA (Ayano et al., 2018). Positive self-capacity can occur if one has a fundamental principle of positive living in their subconscious mind, which can be facilitated through hypnosis. Hypnosis has been shown to significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and depression scores (Rosendahl et al., 2023). In fact, hypnosis acts as a first step in treating depression (Yapko, 2024). Hypnocaring is a model that combines hypnosis and caring (attention, concern) as an intervention aimed at enhancing well-being and quality of life. Hypnocaring has been proven effective in reducing stress and improving well-being in patients with various conditions (Permatasari et al., 2023).

Hypnosis is a form of communication aimed at influencing someone to change their level of consciousness, which is a naturally occurring state of awareness where an individual can experience specific thoughts and suggestions to achieve desired psychological, physical, and spiritual changes by lowering brain waves from beta to alpha, theta, and delta (Williamson, 2019). Hypnosis, which is directly related to the level of consciousness and can provide suggestions, gives direct signals to the pituitary gland to regulate body parts according to the suggestions given to each individual, which can help reduce anxiety levels and anxiety disorder (Utami & Mintarsih, 2021). Previous research has also explained that hypnotherapy is one of the proven and effective methods for addressing stress (Hudu Garba & Mamman, 2020). Hypnotherapy can help PLWHA calm their minds because positive suggestions can stimulate the brain, allowing clients to focus on things that can improve their situation while in a relaxed state. Thus, the stress of PLWHA can be managed and controlled, leading to a calmer and more positive mindset (Pujiati et al., 2022). When our brain receives positive responses, the hypothalamus releases endorphins and enkephalins, which function as pain relievers and control the secretion of CRF. When CRF secretion decreases, ACTH secretion stabilizes and is controlled; in other words, a decrease in ACTH stimulates a reduction in cortisol, production, and catecholamines to enhance immune response (Kageyama et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Stress, anxiety, and depression are common issues experienced by people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Hypnotherapy is one of the non-pharmacological interventions that can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. The results of this study indicate several interventions, such as hypnotherapy, a combination of hypnosis with caring, and a combination of mindfulness-based spiritual cognitive therapy with hypnosis. All hypnotherapy interventions, as well as the combined hypnotherapy approaches, have been proven effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

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