

Effect of Autogenic Relaxation on Depression among Menopausal Women in Rural Areas of Thiruvallur District (Tamil Nadu)

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Abstract

An experimental study was conducted among 60 menopausal women, 30 each in experimental and control group who met inclusion criteria. The menopausal women were identified in both the groups and level of depression was assessed using Cornell Dysthymia rating scale. Simple random sampling technique by lottery method was used for selecting the sample. Autogenic relaxation was practiced by the menopausal women for four weeks. The findings revealed that in experimental group, after intervention of autogenic relaxation on depression among menopausal women, 23 (76.7%) had mild depression. There was a statistically significant effectiveness in experimental group at the level of $p < 0.05$. There was a statistically significant association between the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression among menopausal women in the post-experimental group with the type of family at the level of $p < 0.05$.

World Health Organisation (2001) estimated that 450 million people in the world suffer from some form of mental and brain disorders. About 121 million suffer from depression and it is estimated that more than 80,000 die of suicide each year.

American Psychiatric Association (2000) stated that depression is a major health problem affecting six to 16 percent of Americans. Out of it 10 to 25 percent of women and five to 12 percent of men experience depression. In addition, depression increases the life time risk of suicide by 2 percent to 4 percent when compared to the general population, resulting in a 15 percent mortality rate.

Menopausal women are most affected because of the changes in the physical and psychological well being. Adding to this, the life events and role changes, which if positive, improve health and if negative, lead to mental disequilibrium.

Emotionally, menopausal women may experience depression and fatigue due to insomnia, hot flashes, night sweats and reduction in self confidence and libido. Although these emotional responses can be triggered by hormonal changes, they may be related to other factors also.

On reaching the menopause, the changes happening in the body may make a woman feel old, unattractive and worthless. These feelings can trigger depression and lack of sex drive. Relaxation is one crucial way to control these conditions. The investigator realised that autogenic relaxation has been a gift to

the menopausal women; it is one of the simplest and easiest forms of relaxation.

So the investigator felt that helping the menopausal women to practice, autogenic relaxation daily would help them to reduce menopausal depression and enable them to cope up with the menopausal problems.

Review of Literature

Sajatovic et al (2007) in their study of menopause among women with depression and schizophrenia concluded that menopause in women causes various health problems which are of major concern. Treatment strategies to resolve problems during menopause among Indian women are least addressed.

Davi et al (2002) studied the severity and duration of depression in the event of menopause and stated that psychological symptoms during menopause include emotional lability, anxiety, depressed mood, irritability and decreased libido. Severity and duration of symptom findings showed that 50 percent of women had severe symptoms of depression. It was concluded that menopausal women need intervention to reduce the symptoms of depression.

Sengupta (2008) after a survey on the emergence of the menopause in India, reported that a total of 130 million Indian women are expected to live beyond menopause into old age by 2015.

These studies show that menopausal women need lot of social support to relieve the mental stress and depression.

A study was therefore conducted to assess the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression

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among menopausal women in rural areas at Thiruvallur district in Tamil Nadu.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of depression among menopausal women.
2. To elicit the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression.
3. To associate the level of depression with selected demographic variables of menopausal women.

Methodology

The research design chosen for this study was true experimental in nature. The study was conducted among the menopausal women residing in Nemam and Nemam Colony at Thiruvallur district.

Population: The study population for this study included menopausal women with mild and moderate level of depression.

Sample and sample size: Thirty menopausal women each in experimental and control group who met the inclusion criteria within the study period were the sample; Sample size was 60.

Sampling technique: The menopausal women were identified in both the groups and the investigator assessed the level of depression using Cornell dysthymia rating scale. Those who had mild and moderate level of depression and who met the inclusion criteria were randomly selected and assigned for the study using simple random sampling technique by lottery method.

Data Collection Procedure

Simple random sampling technique was used by using lottery method. Autogenic relaxation was taught for seven days for the duration of 30 minutes in the morning from 9 am to 1 pm. Next day return demonstration was done by the menopausal women and the investigator reinforced them to do every day early in the morning. The post-test was conducted after one week interval and the same instrument was used to assess the level of depression and results were statistically analysed.

Results

In control group 12 (40.0%) were in the age group of 41-45 years, eight (26.7%) were in the age group of 51-55 years. In the experimental group 12 (40.0%) were in the age group of 46-50 years, eight (26.7%) were in the age group of 51-55 years.

The educational status shows that seven (23.3%) were illiterates and seven (23.3%) had high school education and four (13.3%) had primary school educa-

tion in the control group. In the experimental group 10 (33.3%) were graduates and four (13.3%) had high school education. With regard to the marital status, 26(86.7%) were married and one (3.3%) was unmarried and separated in the control group.

As for occupation, 16 (15.3%) were unskilled laborers and four (13.3%) were professionals in the control group. In the experimental group 14 (46.7%) were housewives and three (10.0%) were professionals. When considering economic status 22 (73.3%) were partially dependent and one (33.3%) was fully dependent in control group.

In experimental group 17 (56.7%) were partially dependent and one (3.3%) was fully dependent. With respect to the number of children, 21 (70.0%) had three or more children and three (10.0%) had one child in the control group. In the experimental group 12 (40.0%) had two children and seven (23.3%) had one child. According to the type of family, 18 (60.0%) belonged to joint family and 12 (40.0%) to nuclear family in the control group.

With regard to the period of cessation of menstruation 13 (43.3%) had cessation for three years and three (10.0%) had cessation for one year period in control group. In experimental group 10 (33.3%) had cessation for six months and six (20.0%) had cessation for 3 years.

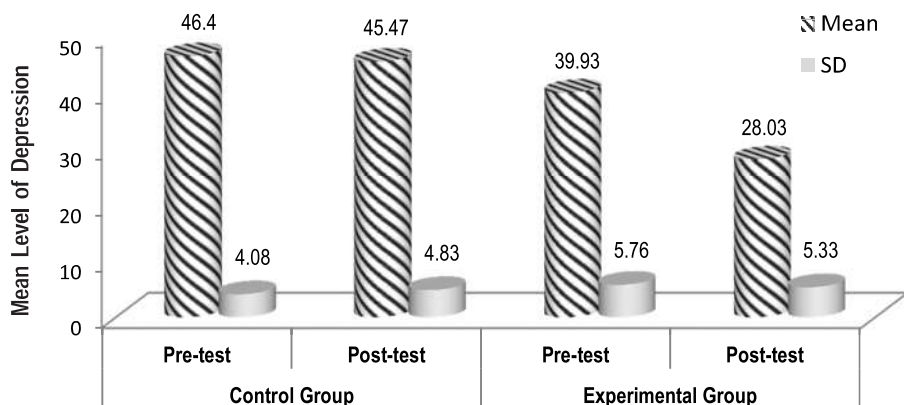
The level of depression in control group 10 (33.3%) had mild and 20 (66.7%) had moderate level of depression in the pretest. In the post-test 22 (73.3%) had mild and eight (26.7%) had moderate level of depression. In the experimental group 15 (50.0%) had mild and moderate level of depression in pre-test. In the post-test 23 (76.7%) had mild level of depression and seven (23.3%) had moderate level of depression

A statistically significant effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression was found among menopausal women in experimental group at the level of $p < 0.05$. There was a statistically significant association between the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression among menopausal women in the post-experimental group with the type of family at the level of $p < 0.05$ (Fig 1 & 2).

Discussion

Autogenic relaxation is a kind of muscle relaxation that has been identified as a beneficial component of holistic health care throughout the world. The women exhibit the maladaptive behaviour in order to cope up with the physiological stress due to menopause. With the use of autogenic relaxation, the women can be helped to come out of depression which had occurred due to menopause.

Fig 1: Mean and SD values of depression during pre / post-test among menopausal women in two groups



The focus of this study was on determining the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression among menopausal women in selected villages of Thiruvallur district. Pre-test was conducted by assessing their level of depression as per Cornell Dysthymia rating scale. The samples were categorized in control and experimental groups. Autogenic relaxation was installed among experimental group and post-test was conducted for both the groups.

Cornell Dysthymia rating scale was used to assess the level of depression among menopausal women. The level of depression in control group 10 (33.3%) had mild and 20 (66.7%) had moderate level of depression in the pre-test. In the post-test, 22 (73.3%) had mild and eight (26.7%) had moderate level of depression. In the experimental group, 15 (50.0%) had mild and moderate level of depression in pre-test. In the post-test 23 (76.7%) had mild level of depression and seven (23.3%) had moderate level of depression.

Dude et al (2005) stated that the prevalence of mental illness was more in reproductive years of women's life followed by the menopausal years. They found that 36 percent of menopausal women suffer from depression.

Mean and standard deviation values on the level of depression during the pre-test and the post-test among the menopausal women in the control and the experimental group. There was no statistically significant difference on the level of depression among menopausal women in the control group. The experimental group illustrates that there was a statistically significant effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on the level of depression in the pre-test and in the post-test at the level

of $p < 0.001$.

Johnsons et al (2003) in their study on depression in menopausal women patients, identified approximately 49 percent of medical patients as depressed and only 10 percent of those identified received appropriate treatment.

The association of demographic variables with the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on the level of depression among menopausal women in the experimental group illustrates that there was statistically

significant association between the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression and the type of family of the menopausal women at the level of $p < 0.05$.

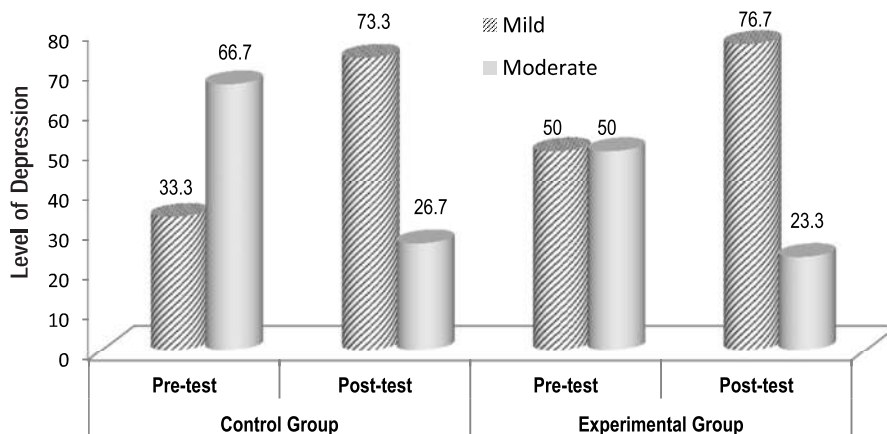
This study revealed the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression among menopausal women and proved that there is a significant effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression among menopausal women.

Limitation: The sample was limited to women with menopause.

Nursing Implications

In the mental health team, nurses play a vital role in the provision of psychosocial therapies. The nurse knows that the menopausal women suffer from depression and it can be the baseline cause for associated disorders. Hence the autogenic relaxation is a simple exercise and easy way of handling the depression. It can be included as a part of relaxation therapy; therefore this study has important implications in: Nursing practice; Nursing education; Nursing administration and Nursing research.

Fig 2: Percentage distribution of level of depression



Nursing practice

Hospital: Menopausal women with physical disorders suffer from depression which has not been revealed during hospitalisation. The nurse has to assess the level of depression among menopausal women. Autogenic relaxation need to be implemented as a part of other therapies and to be practiced by the nurse in her day-to-day activities.

Community: The nurse who focuses on the rehabilitation of menopausal women should know about the autogenic relaxation. In the family, the members can be encouraged to practice and prevent the maladaptive behavior and also to strengthen their defense mechanism. Community psychiatric nurse can also formulate interventional programmes on autogenic relaxation from adolescents to geriatrics, which will have a cost beneficial effect.

Nursing education: The concept of health was prevention is better than cure, need to be concentrated among the menopausal women. Autogenic relaxation need to be included as a relaxation therapy in the nursing curriculum. The nursing students need to be educated regarding the autogenic relaxation. Continuing nursing education can be organised on autogenic relaxation.

Nursing administration: Nursing is an evolving profession to improve the quality of care and practice should be evidence based. The present study showed that there is an effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on depression. The administrator can communicate these findings to the nurses and they can incorporate this in daily patient care. She can motivate nurses to participate in in-service education program on autogenic relaxation.

Nursing research: Practice emerges from research. Evidence-based practice improves the quality of nursing care. This study focuses on improving the quality of nursing care among menopausal women on depression. Research adds value to the comprehensive and holistic care. The nurse involved in patient care can educate the patients and enrich the evidence-based care which will enhance the nursing research.

Recommendations for future research

This study could be replicated with a larger sample to validate and generalise the findings. The

study can be done (i) by maximising the time period of autogenic relaxation, (ii) to determine the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation on specific mental illness. The study can be conducted among different age groups in hospital and community settings.

Autogenic relaxation can be applied in novice and senior students of BSc Nursing to reduce stress. Comparative study can be done to assess the effectiveness of autogenic relaxation among males and females in general wards. Autogenic relaxation can be applied on the care givers of mentally ill patients to reduce stress.

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