

THE BENSON RELAXATION TECHNIQUE IN REDUCING ANXIETY LEVELS IN PRE-OPERATIVE CATARACT PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of Benson's relaxation technique on reducing anxiety levels in patients pre-cataract surgery. The research method uses a quasi-experimental research design. The result of Wilcoxon test showed that there was significant difference in the mean value of anxiety between pretest and posttest in the control group ($z=-5.247$, $p=0.000$), while the result of Wilcoxon showed that there was significant difference in the mean value of anxiety between pretest and posttest in the intervention group ($z=-5.518$, $p=0.000$). The result of Mann Whitney U test showed that $z=-2.574$, $p=0.01$ which indicated that there was significant influence of the value of anxiety between the control group and the intervention group.

Kata Kunci: Cataract, Pre-Operation Anxiety, Benson Relaxation

INTRODUCTION

Cataracts are the main cause of blindness throughout the world. The results of the National Eye Health Survey show that 1.5% of the population in Indonesia is blind, the main cause of blindness is cataracts at 52%. This figure is higher than the blindness rate in Thailand (0.3%), India (0.7%), Bangladesh (1.0%), and in Sub-Saharan Africa (1.4%). Based on the results of the 2020 National Basic Health Research (Risksedas), the prevalence of cataracts in Indonesia is 1.8%, while the prevalence of cataracts in North Sumatra province is 1.4%.

One of the treatments for cataracts is surgery or surgery, which is most often performed on people over 65 years of age. According to the Community Eye Health Center (BKMM) (2021) in North Sumatra and Medan, the prevalence of blindness and morbidity due to cataracts in 2019 was 0.78% and 7.3%. There are three main reasons why cataract sufferers in North Sumatra have not had surgery, namely because of ignorance (36.6%), inability to pay (10.6%), and lack of courage (13.9%) (Risksedas, 2020).

The decision to undergo surgery is very individual because surgery often causes anxiety. Anxiety is a vague and diffuse worry, which is related to feelings of uncertainty and helplessness and this emotional state has no specific object. This anxiety can be manifested directly through physiological changes such as (shaking, sweating, increased heart rate, abdominal pain, shortness of breath) and behavioral changes such as (restlessness, rapid speech, startled reactions) and indirectly through the emergence of symptoms as an effort to fight back. anxiety showed that of the 31 respondents who were going to undergo cataract surgery, there were 16 people with mild anxiety, 10 people with moderate anxiety, and 5 people with severe anxiety.

One therapy that can reduce anxiety is the Benson relaxation technique. Benson therapy was discovered by a scientist named Herbert Benson, this technique called Benson relaxation is a procedure to help individuals who are experiencing stressful situations and are trying to relieve

stress. Benson & Proctor (2020) explain that the Benson relaxation technique consists of four basic components, namely a calm atmosphere, mental equipment, passive attitude and comfortable position.

Benson relaxation is an effective method for reducing anxiety, depression and stress. Benson relaxation is a method that does not cause side effects, is cost effective, affordable and easy to apply. Apart from that, to maximize the results in applying this therapy, the researcher recommends that future researchers conduct research with a larger sample, over a longer period of time and combining it with other variables.

Benson's relaxation technique is a relaxation technique combined with the beliefs held by the patient. Certain formula words or sentences that are read repeatedly involving elements of faith and belief will cause a stronger relaxation response compared to just relaxation without involving the patient's elements of belief. This technique will inhibit sympathetic nerve activity which can reduce oxygen consumption by the body and subsequently relax the body's muscles, giving rise to a feeling of calm and comfort (Anisah & Maliya, 2021).

Research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the Benson Relaxation technique to reduce anxiety, stress, depression, pain levels and improve quality of life. Research conducted by Agustiya et al., (2020) shows that Benson relaxation is effective on the anxiety level of patients undergoing Hemodialysis therapy seen from the average anxiety value and standard deviation of 44.28 and 8.30.

Benson Relaxation has also been shown to significantly reduce blood glucose levels. Juwita et al., (2021)'s research aims to see differences in blood glucose levels before and after Benson Relaxation in 19 elderly people with diabetes in the treatment group. The results showed that Benson relaxation could significantly reduce blood glucose levels in diabetes mellitus patients ($p = 0.001$). The relaxing effect on blood glucose is by suppressing the production of stress hormones such as epinephrine and cortisol, thereby preventing an increase in blood glucose levels.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research includes quantitative research. The type of research used in this research is quasi-experimental using a pre-test and post-test group design. The research was conducted at RSU Mitra Medika Tanjung Mulia. The number of samples in this research was 48 respondents, with the sampling technique using purposive sampling. The research phase started from the Pretest using the State Anxiety Inventory (SAI) questionnaire, then the Benson relaxation technique intervention was given with 2 sessions, the first session after the respondent was consulted at the eye clinic and determined to undergo cataract surgery, then the second session 1 hour before the operation was carried out.

After the intervention, a posttest was carried out again with the same questionnaire. Test the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach alpha. The bivariate analysis used in this study was the Wilcoxon signed ranks test which was used to assess the anxiety level of pre-cataract surgery patients in the intervention group (within group). Meanwhile, to assess the level of post-test anxiety between the intervention and control groups (between groups) using the non-parametric Mann Whitney test with a significance of $p < 0.05$ with the following decision making, namely if the analysis results obtained a value of $p < 0.05$, then it can be concluded that H_0 was rejected.

RESULT**Characteristics of Respondents in Preoperative Cataract Patients**

Table. 1
Frequency Distribution and Percentage Data Characteristics of Respondents
for Pre-Cataract Surgery Patients (N = 96)

Characteristics	Intervention Group (n = 48)		Control Group (n = 48)		<i>p value</i>
	f	%	f	%	
Age					0,793
46-55 (early seniors)	10	20,8	6	12,5	
56-65 56-65 (late seniors)	20	41,7	20	41,7	
>65 (seniors)	18	37,5	22	45,8	
Gender					0,773
Man	24	50	23	47,9	
Woman	24	50	25	52,1	
Level of education					0,231
No school	3	6,3	9	18,8	
Elementary school	7	14,6	17	35,4	
Junior High School	7	14,6	4	8,3	
Senior High School	31	64,6	18	37,5	
College	0	0	0	0	
Work					0,200
Doesn't work	34	70,8	35	72,9	
Private employees	0	0	0	0	
PNS/TNI/POLRI	0	0	0	0	
Farmers/Traders/Laborers	14	29,2	13	27,1	
Monthly Income					0,131
< IDR 2,300,000	34	70,8	41	85,4	
IDR 2,300,000- IDR 3,000,000	10	20,8	5	10,4	
> 3.000.000	4	8,3	2	4,2	
Marital status					Constant
Not married	0	0	0	0	
Marry	48	100	48	100	
Long Suffering from Cataracts					0,226
<6Months	26	54,2	26	54,2	
≥6Months	22	45,8	22	45,8	

Based on Table 1, it is observed that in the control group, respondents aged 46-55 years accounted for 6 individuals (12.5%), 20 individuals (41.7%) were in the 56-65 age group, and 22 individuals (45.8%) were above 65 years old. In terms of gender, the number of female respondents was 24 individuals (50%), while the number of male respondents was also 24 individuals (50%). A total of 31 individuals (64.6%) had a background of SMA (Senior High School) education. Furthermore, 34 individuals (70.8%) in the control group were unemployed, with 34 individuals (70.8%) having an income of less than Rp. 2,300,000. All respondents in the control group were married and had been suffering from cataracts for less than 6 months. In contrast, for the Benson relaxation group, respondents aged 46-55 years numbered 10 individuals (20.8%), 20 individuals (41.7%) were in the 56-65 age group, and 18 individuals (37.5%) were above 65 years old. In terms of gender, 23 individuals (47.9%) were male, and 25 individuals (52.1%) were female.

Within this group, 18 individuals (37.5%) had an educational background of SMA. Additionally, 35 individuals (72.9%) in the Benson relaxation group were unemployed, with 41 individuals (85.4%) having an income of less than Rp. 2,300,000. Similar to the control group, all respondents in the Benson relaxation group were married and had been suffering from cataracts for less than 6 months.

Description of Anxiety Levels in Patients Before and After Benson Relaxation

Table. 2
Distribution of Anxiety Levels Of Pre-Test And Post-Test Cataract Surgery Patients In The Control Group And Benson Relaxation Intervention Group (N = 96)

Group	Pre-Test						Post-Test					
	Worried Light (36-50)		Worried Currently (51-65)		Severe Anxiety (66-80)		No Worried (20-35)		Mild Anxiety (36-50)		Moderately Anxious (51-65)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Control	44	92	4	8	0	0	28	58,3	17	35,4	3	6,3
Intervention	38	79,2	10	20,8	0	0	32	66,7	15	31,2	1	2,1

Based on the anxiety scores measured using the SAI (Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory), in the control group, 91% of respondents experienced mild anxiety, and 8% experienced moderate anxiety before receiving information related to cataract surgery. In the intervention group, 79.2% of respondents experienced mild anxiety, and 20.8% experienced moderate anxiety before the Benson relaxation intervention. After providing information related to cataract surgery in the control group, 58.3% of respondents were not anxious, 35.4% experienced mild anxiety, and 6.3% experienced moderate anxiety. Meanwhile, in the intervention group, 66.7% of respondents were not anxious, 31.2% experienced mild anxiety, and 2.1% experienced moderate anxiety.

The Difference in Mean Anxiety Scores of Preoperative Cataract Patients in the Pre-Test and Post-Test within the Control Group and Benson Relaxation Intervention Group

Table. 3
Differences in Mean Anxiety Scores Of Pre-Test And Post-Test Cataract Surgery Patients In The Control And Intervention Groups (N = 96)

Variable	Pre Test		Post Test		z	p value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Intervention Group Worry	41,69	6,783	34,13	5,197	-5,518	0,000
Control group Worry	40,00	5,750	37,02	6,821	-5,247	0,000

Based on the results of the analysis, it shows that there is a difference between before and after using the Benson relaxation technique in the intervention group and control group with a p value of 0.000 each.

Anxiety of Preoperative Cataract Patients in the Post-Test between the Control Group and the Benson Relaxation Intervention Group

Table. 4
Anxiety of Post Test Cataract Surgery Patients between the Control Group and the Benson Relaxation Intervention Group (N= 96)

Variable	Group Control (n= 48)		Group Intervention (n= 48)		<i>u</i>	<i>p value</i>
	MR	SR	MR	SR		
Worry	55,78	2677,50	41,22	1978,50	-2,574	0,01

The difference in mean anxiety levels of preoperative cataract patients in the pre-test and post-test was analyzed using the Mann Whitney U statistical test. Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in the mean anxiety levels between the control group and the intervention group. The mean anxiety level in the intervention group is lower ($u = -2.574$, $p = 0.01$) compared to the control group.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Pre-Cataract Surgery Patients at Mitra Medika RSU Medan

Based on the research conducted at Mitra Medika Hospital, the majority of the respondents were in the age group of 56-65 years (late elderly), with 40 individuals, and > 65 years (elderly), with 40 individuals. Individuals aged 50 years and older are where vision impairments and blindness are more common (Kemenkes RI, 2020). According to Rismawan et al. (2020), the elderly-elderly group is the most commonly found age group with cataract disorders, accounting for 120 patients (60.9%).

Surgery or surgery is a medical procedure that involves surgical intervention in the body to improve physical function. Surgery is a form of medical treatment that can cause fear, anxiety and stress. The psychological problem that patients usually experience before surgery is anxiety. Anxiety is a mistake, doubt in something that will happen with an unclear cause or object related to feelings of uncertainty such as worry about facing surgery. There are two factors that cause a person to experience anxiety, namely first, predisposing factors include several psychoanalytic theories such as emotional and socio-cultural conflict, interpersonal theory, family theory and biological theories such as physical disorders. Second, precipitation factors, namely stressors that trigger anxiety which influence internal and external factors. Internal factors include age, gender, education level, employment and income (Guslinda, 2020)

Based on the research results, it showed that 52 respondents had suffered from cataracts < 6 months and 44 respondents had suffered from cataracts \geq 6 months. From the results of interviews with respondents, researchers obtained a statement that the respondent's decision to have cataract surgery was due to the discomfort of doing activities with blurred vision, however, the decision-making process for surgery took a long time because the respondent was anxious and doubtful about whether the operation would be successful or not.

Anxiety levels of pre-test and post-test cataract surgery patients in the control group and Benson relaxation intervention group

From the research results, it is known that the majority of respondents were aged 56-65 years (late elderly) as many as 40 people and > 65 years (seniors) as many as 40 people. Increasing a person's age can also influence the emergence of anxiety, with increasing age they

will experience health problems, both physically and psychologically. In line with Stuart's theory, the older a person gets, the more problems they have, so that older people suffer from stress more easily than younger people. Increasing age results in radical adjustments to changing roles and lifestyle patterns, especially when accompanied by various physical changes, which tend to experience a decline in brain function, homeostasis and body cells. This is in line with research (2022) that the largest age group that feels anxious is late adulthood towards old age. Apart from that, the application of EBN is in line with research by Suwanto (2019), that the average patient with chronic kidney failure who undergoes hemodialysis therapy is in the elderly category. This is also in line with the results of research by Hudiyawati, Muhlisin, Normala (2019) which states that patients who undergo hemodialysis, namely the age group 41-60 years or what is called late adulthood and towards early old age.

A person's education also has an influence on the emergence of anxiety, that the higher the education, the lower the anxiety response. The education a person has makes the individual more selective during the anxiety response. A higher level of education has a better adaptive response because the response given is more rational and also influences awareness and understanding of the stimulus. This is also consistent with the fact that a person's level of education is very important in the emergence of anxiety, because the higher a person's level of education, the more rational the decisions they make.

Differences in the Mean Anxiety Scores of Pre Test and Post Test Cataract Surgery Patients in the Control Group and the Benson Relaxation Intervention Group

Benson Therapy is a treatment technique to help relieve anxiety in the elderly. It is called Benson Therapy because this technique was discovered by a professor, writer, cardiologist and founder of the Harvard Mind/Body Medical Institute which was initiated by Hebert Benson in 1960-1970. This technique was originally known as the Relaxation Response, which is a person's personal ability to encourage the body to release chemicals and brain signals that make muscles and organs slower and increase blood flow to the brain (Anasari, Eka, & Yuli, 2022).

The Benson relaxation technique is a breathing exercise technique. With regular and correct breathing exercises, the body will become more relaxed, relieve tension when experiencing stress and be free from threats. The feeling of relaxation will be transmitted to the hypothalamus to produce Corticotropin Releasing Factor (CRF). Furthermore, CRF stimulates the pituitary gland to increase production of Proopiomelanocortin (POMC) so that enkephalin production by the adrenal medulla increases. The pituitary gland also produces beta-endorphin as a neurotransmitter which influences relaxed mood. The deep breathing relaxation technique also has other benefits, namely reducing levels of cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine which can cause hemodynamic changes, namely reducing blood pressure and pulse frequency (Agustiya, Hudiyawati, Purnama, 2020).

Research by Agustiya, Hudiyawati, Purnama (2020), researchers conducted research on Benson therapy for anxiety in hemodialysis patients. The results showed that Benson therapy had an influence or was effective on anxiety. The average anxiety score before the Benson relaxation intervention was carried out was 44.28 with a standard deviation of 8.30. Meanwhile, the average anxiety value after being given the Benson relaxation intervention was 34.42 with a standard deviation of 6.37 with a p value <0.05 (Anisah & Maliya, 2021).

Physiologically, when humans enter the relaxation stage, they enter alpha waves (7-14 Hz). When the brain enters this wave, the brain will produce endorphin hormones which produce a feeling of comfort and calm. According to researchers, based on various theories and supporting research, the Benson relaxation technique can be used to fight anxiety which is

manifested by stress or depression. The memories that appear are caused by alpha brain waves which cause humans to feel happy and comfortable. The human pituitary gland also produces calming hormones, namely endorphins and encephalins, which have a calming and comfortable effect. Meanwhile, from the theory of homeostasis in the human body, parasympathetic nerve activity will increase, resulting in a decrease in the synthesis of catecholamine hormones, which results in decreased muscle contractions, decreased heart rate, vasodilation of blood vessels and decreased blood pressure. Benson relaxation therapy, which is a relaxation therapy that combines deep breathing relaxation techniques and religious or belief relaxation, provides multiple benefits in awakening memories in humans.

In this study, researchers carried out the Benson relaxation technique in 2 sessions, namely after the consultation at the eye clinic and 1 hour before cataract surgery. The researcher arranges the patient's comfortable position in a lying or sitting condition, then asks the patient to choose one word or short expression that reflects belief, such as the name of Allah, calm and so on, asks the patient to close his eyes slowly, while relaxing the muscles starting from the feet, calves, thighs, stomach, etc. waist, head, neck and shoulders by turning the head and lifting the shoulders slowly, extend both arms and hands, then relax them and let them fall on the knees with open hands in a prayer position (if sitting), ask the patient to take a breath and start using focus words that are rooted in belief, inhale from the nose, then exhale through the mouth slowly while saying the chosen phrase, this technique is carried out for 20 minutes.

High levels of anxiety affect the work of the hypothalamus where the hypothalamus will release norrepinephrine. The release of norrepinephrine will result in a person's feeling of high alertness. With Benson Relaxation, it will suppress the secretion of norepinephrine by the hypothalamus, thereby making a person relax and reducing anxiety. According to Benson (2020), Benson's relaxation will inhibit sympathetic nerve activity to reduce oxygen consumption so that the body's muscles relax. This relaxation method is able to reduce cortisol levels in the body which will result in a decrease in anxiety levels.

Patient Anxiety Pre-Post Test Cataract Surgery between the Control Group and the Benson Relaxation Intervention Group

In the control group, there was a decrease in anxiety levels because respondents were given information regarding cataract surgery. Information about cataract surgery is provided by doctors and hospital nurses, the information obtained is related to indications for surgery, benefits of surgery, preparation before surgery, surgical procedures, and the risk of surgical failure. Based on the research results of the intervention group, it showed a significant average level of anxiety, this proves that the Benson relaxation technique can reduce cortisol secretion so that it is more effective in reducing patient anxiety.

Another study that is in line with this research is the application of the Benson relaxation technique to preoperative patients carried out by Salmanzadeh et.al. (2019) showed that the anxiety level of patients before cesarean section in the Benson intervention group was lower than the control group ($p < 0.001$). In this study, Benson relaxation was given twice with a duration of 15 minutes in a 2 hour interval. Tahmasbi and Hasani (2019) in research on patients who were going to undergo coronary angiography, stated that the use of the Benson relaxation technique significantly reduced anxiety in the intervention group ($p = 0.0001$). In this study, Benson relaxation was given by researchers the day before coronary angiography with a duration of 20 minutes. . Benson Relaxation is the development of a respiratory relaxation response method that involves the patient's belief factors, which can create an internal environment that can help patients achieve a higher state of health and well-being (Benson & Proctor, 2020).

Benson relaxation is an effective method for reducing anxiety, depression and stress. Benson relaxation is a method that does not cause side effects, is cost effective, affordable and easy to apply. Apart from that, to maximize the results in applying this therapy, the researcher recommends that future researchers conduct research with a larger sample, over a longer period of time and combining it with other variables.

The combination of relaxation techniques and strong, good beliefs are factors for successful relaxation. The element of belief that will be used in the intervention is the element of religious belief. The element of belief included is the repeated mention of words or sentences that are in accordance with one's religious beliefs accompanied by an attitude of resignation. Benson relaxation therapy is a therapy that can be a reference for reducing depression, especially for those who have religious beliefs.

Supporting research is research from Sari, Sriningsih, and Pratiwi (2022), that there is an influence of Benson relaxation therapy on pre-operative patient anxiety at District Hospital. Tangerang with a p-value of 0.000. Other research that supports this is research from Anisah & Maliyah (2021), that there is an influence of Benson therapy on anxiety levels in hemodialysis patients. The way Benson's relaxation technique works is to focus on certain words or sentences that are said repeatedly with a regular rhythm accompanied by an attitude of surrender to God Almighty. while taking a deep breath. Long breaths can provide sufficient energy, because when you exhale you release carbon dioxide (CO₂) and when you inhale you get oxygen which the body really needs to cleanse the blood and prevent damage to brain tissue due to lack of oxygen (hypoxia). When you take a deep breath, the abdominal wall muscles (rectus abdominalis, transverses abdominalis, internal and external obliques) press the lower ribs towards the back and push the diaphragm upwards which can result in raising the chest. right intra-abdominal, so that it can stimulate blood flow both in the inferior vena cava and abdominal aorta, resulting in increased blood flow (vascularization) throughout the body, especially vital organs such as the brain, so that O₂ is sufficient in the brain and the body becomes relaxed. A person who relaxes, the activity of the limbic system decreases. A study conducted in 2012 by researchers in Japan and Harvard Medical School showed that spiritual ritual behavior such as prayer also affects the hypothalamus, especially in the area responsible for regulating the autonomic nervous system. Because the limbic system contains the hypothalamus, which controls the autonomic nervous system, reduction of the limbic region could explain how relaxation reduces stress and anxiety and increases autonomic stability by increasing the action of the hypothalamic nuclei that regulate the parasympathetic nervous system.

Additionally, according to Anisah and Maliyah (2021), in the meditation method there is also meditation that involves the belief factor, namely transcendental meditation. This meditation was developed by Mahesh Yogi by taking as an object of meditation a phrase or mantra that is repeated rhythmically where the phrase is closely related to the religious beliefs held. A relaxation response that involves the beliefs held will accelerate the occurrence of a relaxed state. In other words, the combination of a relaxation response involving beliefs will multiply the benefits obtained from the relaxation response. Feelings of relaxation will be transmitted to the hypothalamus to produce Corticotropin Releasing Factor (CRF). Furthermore, CRF stimulates the pituitary gland to increase the production of Proopiomelanocortin (POMC) so that enkephalin production by the adrenal medulla increases. The pituitary gland also produces beta-endorphin as a neurotransmitter which influences relaxed mood. The deep breathing relaxation technique also has other benefits, namely reducing levels of cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine which can cause hemodynamic changes, namely reducing blood pressure and pulse frequency and improving the sleep quality of dialysis patients.

CONCLUSION

The results of statistical tests in the study showed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test anxiety of pre-cataract surgery patients in the Benson relaxation intervention group with a p value of 0.000 and $z = -5.518$, thus it was concluded that there was an influence of the Benson relaxation technique on the anxiety level of pre-operative patients. cataract. The anxiety of pre-cataract surgery post-test patients between the control group and the Benson relaxation intervention group was $u = -2.574$ and $p = 0.01$, thus Benson relaxation had more influence in reducing the anxiety of pre-cataract surgery patients compared to the control group.

SUGGESTION

For nursing services, Benson relaxation technique training can be carried out for nurses and standardized in the form of Benson relaxation SOP so that it becomes a trendsetter in nursing. For further research, Benson relaxation can be carried out by ensuring the readiness of respondents and providing explanations to respondents to focus during the implementation of relaxation techniques

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