RESEARCH ARTICLE

PRE-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BENSON'S RELAXATION THERAPY ON STRESS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Nursing students reported moderate stress during the first year of their course due to the change in social environment and academic curriculum. Benson's Relaxation Therapy reduces the level of stress. The study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of Benson's Relaxation Therapy on stress among the 1st year nursing students.

AIM: To assess the effectiveness of Benson's Relaxation Therapy on stress among the first year nursing students.

MATERIAL AND METHODS: A quantitative approach and Pre-experimental one group pre-test & post-test research design was conducted in Rayat Bahra College of Nursing, Sahauran, Punjab, on 60 subjects fulfilling inclusion and exclusion criteria, by purposive sampling. Each subject received Benson's Relaxation Therapy for 30 Minutes and the level of stress was assessed by using self structured questionnaire. The socio-demographic sheet which was structured interview schedule was filled by subjects.

RESULTS: The results revealed that most of the study subject experienced mild to moderate stress. Although Benson's Relaxation Therapy was effective in reducing the stress level, however, it was not associated (at $p<0.05$) with the age, gender, habitat, Family type, Residence, education of father & mother, occupation of father & mother.

CONCLUSION: Benson's Relaxation Therapy is effective in reducing the stress level and can be implemented in academic settings.

KEYWORDS: Nursing Students, Stress level, Benson's Relaxation Therapy.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Stress among nursing students is a paramount concern of nursing educators because high stress levels often lead to decreased learning and higher drop-out rates. Moderate to high levels of stress have been found to have a negative effect on learning and impaired judgment. The purpose of this experimental study was to determine the level of stress experienced by nursing students enrolled in their first nursing course. Stress experienced by nursing students may adversely affect academic achievement, personal wellbeing and long-term professional capabilities. These experiences may interfere with the learning process in nursing students, and may put students at risk for physical or psychological problems. The complex nature of the nursing profession places unique demands and challenges on students in dealing with patients.[2] The term, 'relaxation response' was coined by Dr. Herbert Benson, Professor, author, cardiologist, and founder of Harvard's mind/body medical institute. The response is defined as your personal ability to encourage your body to release chemicals and brain signals that make your muscles and organs slow down and increase blood flow to the brain. In his book the Relaxation Response, Dr. Benson describes the scientific benefits of relaxation, explaining that regular practice of the relaxation response can be an effective treatment for a wide range of stress-related disorders. The relaxation response is essentially the opposite reaction to the "fight or flight" response. According to Dr. Benson, using the relaxation response is beneficial as it counteracts the physiological effects of stress and the fight or flight response. The best time to practice the relaxation response is first thing in the morning for ten to twenty minutes. Practicing just once or twice daily can be enough to counteract the stress response and bring about deep relaxation and inner peace. Following is the Relaxation Response technique taken directly from Dr. Herbert Benson's book, "The Relaxation Response".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the pre-test score of stress among the 1st year nursing students.
2. To determine post test score of stress among 1st year nursing students.
3. To compare the pre-test and post-test score among 1st year nursing students.
4. To determine the association between pre-test levels of stress among 1st year nursing students with selected socio - demographic variables.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Approach and design: A quantitative approach and pre- experimental one group pre-test & post-test research design was employed to conduct to accomplish the objectives of the study in Rayat Bahra College of Nursing, Sahauran, Punjab.

Sample & sampling technique: Purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 sample from G.N.M 1st year, Basic B.Sc Nursing 1st year, Post Basic B.Sc Nursing 1st year studying in Rayat Bahra College of Nursing, Sahauran, Punjab, meeting the exclusion and inclusion criteria.

Description of tool: The tool consists of basically two parts:-

PART 1: Socio-Demographic data: This part consisted of items to collect socio- demographic data such as age, gender, Class, Academic stream, Habitat, Family type, Family income per month in rupees, Residence, education of father, education of mother, occupation of father, and occupation of mother.

PART 2: Likert scale consists of 30 statements to assess the level of stress among undergraduate nursing students. These statements are developed for the respond on four Rating scale. Scale contains 11 negative items and 19 positive items. The scale contains total 30 items where maximum score of each is 3 and total score is 30*3= 90. Here Score 0 means Normal; 1 is mild stress; 2 & 3 are moderate and severe stress respectively. Score <30 is considered is Mild stress, Score between 31-60 is considered moderate & score >60 is considered as severe stress.

Procedure of data collection: Written permission was taken from Director Principal of Rayat Bahra College of Nursing.The subjects were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study. An informed verbal consent was taken from study sample after assuring the confidentiality of information collected. Data was collected from subjects regarding socio-demographic characteristics and questions related to stress which was filled by respondents.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study has been approved by the ethical committee of Rayat Bahra college of Nursing, Mohali. Considering the rights of the subjects, only those who willingly participated in the study, written informed consent was taken after explaining and giving written information to them. The confidentiality and privacy was duly taken care of.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic data of subjects

It describes that 65% students were in the age group of 17-19 years, 26.66% students were in the age group of 20-22 years, 8.33% students were in the age group of 23-25 years. Majority i.e. 93.33% students were females and 6.66% students were males. Majority of students i.e. 56.66% were from medical stream followed by 11.66% were from non-medical stream. According to class of students, 33.33% students were of GNM 1st Year and 51.66% students were of Basic B.sc. Nursing 1st year, 15% students were of B.sc. (N) Post Basic 1st year.

Majority of students i.e. 45% were from rural area 60% were having nuclear families. Maximum i.e. 36.66% students family monthly income was between Rs.20,000-30,000 and 15% students were having below Rs.10,000. 31.66% and 48.33% student's fathers and mothers were graduate respectively. 45% of fathers were in government job and half of mothers i.e. 50% mothers were home makers.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage distribution of students according to pre-test stress level among the 1st year Nursing Students.

N=60

Pre-Test (Stress Score)	Frequency	Percentage
≤30 (Mild stress)	2	3.33
31-60(Moderate Stress)	58	96.6

Table 1 depicts that, before giving Benson's Relaxation Therapy in pre test group , there was no severe stress whereas in 2(3.33%) in mild stress and 58(96.6%) subjects were in moderate stress.

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage distribution of students according to post-test stress level among the 1st year Nursing Students.

N=60

Post-Test (Stress Score)	Frequency	Percentage
≤30 (Mild stress)	57	95
31-60(Moderate Stress)	3	5

Table 2 depicts that when comparison is done after giving Benson's Relaxation Therapy, maximum subjects i.e. 57(95%) was in mild stress and 3(5%) were in moderate stress and no subject was found in severe stress in post test group.

Table 3
Comparison of effectiveness of Benson's Relaxation Therapy on stress level between the pre-test and post-test

N=60

Stress Level	Pre-Test (f / %)	Post-Test (f / %)	T test, df
Mild	2 (3.33)	57 (95)	37.08*, 59
Moderate	58 (96.6)	3(5)	

***= Significant at p<0.05**

Table 3 showed comparison of effectiveness of Benson's Relaxation Therapy on stress level between the pre-test and post-test. Before giving Benson's Relaxation Therapy in pre test group, there was no severe stress whereas in 2(3.33%) in mild stress and 58(96.6%) subjects were in moderate stress. Similarly when comparison is done after giving Benson's Relaxation Therapy 57(95%) was in mild stress and 3(5%) were in moderate stress and no subject was found in severe stress in post test group. Here computed paired t-test calculated value is more than the tabulated value i.e. 37.08 and p value is 0.05 respectively which is statistically significant at p<0.05.

Thus it clearly indicates the effectiveness of Benson's Relaxation Therapy in reducing the stress level in the post test group in 1st year nursing students.

As per association of stress level with demographic variables of the subjects shows no association of with age, gender, academic stream, habitat, type of family, monthly family income of education and occupation of parents of 1st year nursing students and

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study revealed that maximum subjects of the study were ranging from 17-22 years age group which was under the moderate stress level in pre-experimental group. Similar findings were reported by Torabizadeh & Bostani[5], majority of the moderate stress level were belonged to age group 17-25 years in pre-experimental group.

According to present study it was found that Benson's Relaxation Therapy helped in reducing stress of post experimental group. Whereas, before Benson's Relaxation Therapy there was moderate level of stress to subjects and afterwards stress level decreases to mild after the implementation of Benson's Relaxation Therapy. The present study findings were supported by Boomi[6]there was a significant reduction in the levels of stress in the experimental group. Whereas in experimental group the post stress score was 3.13±2.16. The "t" value is 3.41 which is significant at p≤ 0.05 level, where significant difference was observed.

The present study revealed that Relaxation therapy showed significant difference in student's stress perception in pre experimental and post experimental group. It was found that in pre experimental 2% students had mild and 98% had moderate stress after intervention. Whereas none was in severe stress level. In comparison to that 99% and 1% students had been seen in mild and moderate stress level respectively in post experimental group.

The findings were consistent where 't' value in the pre and post experimental group was 37.08, which was significant at p<0.05 level which shows that Benson's Relaxation Therapy helps in reducing stress level of post experimental group students ('t' value was 37.08 which was significant). The above findings were consistent with the study conducted by Rosentfeldt[7]. It was calculated that 60% of the patient experienced reduction in stress level in experimental group, where as 40% of the patients experienced reduction of stress in the usual care received group. P-value at 0.05 level. Hence Benson's Relaxation Therapy was found to be very effective.

CONCLUSION

Most of the study subjects (96.6%) experienced moderate stress during their first years of nursing programme. Benson's Relaxation Therapy was effective in reducing in stress level and can be implemented in academic settings.

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