

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PLANNED RELAXATION THERAPY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS

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ABSTRACT:

The elderly population in India, particularly individuals aged 60 and above, is expected to experience a significant increase in the coming years, presenting challenges in social, economic, and healthcare realms. Depression, anxiety, and stress often intertwine, affecting the emotional well-being of older individuals. This study focuses on evaluating the efficacy of Planned Relaxation Therapy in addressing specific psychological issues in the elderly population. By exploring the impact of this therapy, valuable insights were gained into enhancing mental health and overall well-being in older adults.

KEY WORDS: *Relaxation therapy, elderly population, psychological therapy.*

INTRODUCTION

The aging population in India is undergoing a significant demographic shift, with the number of elderly individuals aged 60 and above projected to rise substantially in the coming decades. This increase poses various challenges in terms of social, economic, and healthcare policies due to evolving family structures and limited support systems for the elderly. Depression, anxiety, and stress often coexist, complicating emotional well-being in older individuals. Managing these psychological issues is crucial for enhancing overall quality of life. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Planned Relaxation Therapy in addressing selected psychological problems among the elderly, offering insights into potential strategies for improving mental health in this demographic group.

Planned Relaxation Therapy on Psychological Well-being in Elderly Individuals focuses on using specific relaxation techniques to improve mental health in older adults. This therapy aims to reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress commonly experienced by elderly individuals. The structured nature of Planned Relaxation Therapy involves scheduled sessions where participants engage in relaxation exercises guided by a trained professional.

During these sessions, various relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and mindfulness meditation are typically employed. These techniques help elderly individuals to calm their minds, reduce muscle tension, and promote a sense of inner peace and relaxation. By incorporating Planned Relaxation Therapy into their routine, elderly individuals can learn coping strategies to manage psychological challenges and enhance their overall well-being. The benefits of Planned Relaxation Therapy extend beyond just the immediate relaxation effects. Regular practice of these techniques can lead to long-term improvements in mental health by reducing the frequency and intensity of negative emotions and promoting a more positive outlook on life. Additionally, Planned Relaxation Therapy can help elderly individuals improve their sleep quality, concentration, and overall quality of life.

Based on the current scenario, the elderly population in India aged 60 and above is expected to rise significantly, from 77 million in 2001 to 179 million in 2031 and further to 301 million in 2051. The proportion is projected to increase to 12% by 2031 and 17% by 2051. In Tamilnadu, the elderly population accounts for 7.5% of the total population, with 7% in urban areas and 7.7% in rural areas. This demographic shift poses various challenges in social, economic, and healthcare policies due to changing family structures and limited old-age support. Individuals facing depression often experience additional emotional burdens, with depression, anxiety, and stress often intertwining. Managing stress and anxiety can help improve depression symptoms. The study aims to evaluate the impact of Planned Relaxation Therapy on specific psychological issues among elderly individuals.

METHODOLOGY:

The study followed a pre-experimental design, utilizing one group with "before," "during," and "after" measurements. The experimental group (n=125) was selected using random numbers. Data collection involved tools such as the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-42). Structured interventions were conducted daily for 30-40 minutes over ninety days with the experimental group. The elderly participants in residential care were supervised by the researcher and nursing staff during their relaxation therapy sessions. The post-test involved administering the DASS-42 after 92 days to the experimental group. Data analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics, revealing a significant difference between pre and post-test scores on the DASS-42 through the paired t-test.

RESULTS:

The paired t-test results for pre and post-tests on psychological issues among the elderly indicated a highly significant difference in depression ($p < 0.0001$), anxiety ($p < 0.001$), and stress ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This suggests a significant improvement in depression, anxiety, and stress levels from pre-test to post-test, indicating a reduction in these psychological problems among the elderly participants. The Planned Relaxation Therapy serves as a valuable tool in supporting the psychological well-being of elderly individuals. By providing a structured approach to relaxation and stress management, this therapy offers a holistic way to address mental health issues in the elderly population. Through consistent practice and guidance, elderly individuals can experience significant improvements in their psychological well-being, leading to a better quality of life in their later years.

CONCLUSION:

The study findings highlighted the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among residential elderly individuals in their daily lives. Through the implementation of Relaxation Therapy techniques, a notable reduction in these psychological issues was observed. The results strongly indicate the effectiveness of Relaxation Therapy in diminishing depression, anxiety, and stress levels among the elderly residing in residential care facilities. By engaging in regular relaxation sessions, the participants experienced significant improvements in their mental well-being. This underscores the importance of incorporating Relaxation Therapy as a valuable intervention to address and alleviate psychological challenges faced by the elderly population. The study's outcomes emphasize the positive impact and efficacy of such therapeutic techniques

in enhancing the emotional health and overall quality of life for residential elderly individuals. Moving forward, the integration of Relaxation Therapy into the care routines of elderly residents could serve as a beneficial and practical approach to promoting mental wellness and reducing psychological distress in this vulnerable demographic.

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