


Section: Mental Health Nursing

Slow stroke back massage to reduce insomnia in elderly

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Abstract

Psychological changes in the elderly often stem from shifts in their roles and physical abilities, impacting their capacity to perform personal and social activities. A significant issue affecting both the physical and psychological well-being of the elderly is sleeping disorders, particularly insomnia. Addressing insomnia in the elderly can involve pharmacological treatments, but non-pharmacological therapies like Slow Stroke Back Massage (SSBM) are often preferred due to fewer side effects and overall health benefits. This study explores the effectiveness of Slow Stroke Back Massage as a non-pharmacological intervention for reducing insomnia in elderly individuals. The methodology includes assessing patients through structured nursing care. The study sample consisted of three elderly individuals who reported chronic sleep difficulties. After implementing the SSBM intervention, findings showed a marked reduction in insomnia symptoms across the participants. The study concludes that Slow Stroke Back Massage is a highly effective, non-pharmacological approach for alleviating insomnia in the elderly, especially in the Mungkid area of Magelang. The research highlights the potential of SSBM as a simple yet powerful technique for improving sleep quality, thereby enhancing both the psychological and physical well-being of elderly individuals with sleep disorders.

Keywords: Insomnia; nursing intervention; elderly; mental health nursing; complementary therapy

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Indonesia saw a significant increase of 41% in its elderly population in 2020, totaling 28.8 million people, with an average life expectancy of 71.1 years. By 2025, it's projected that Indonesia's elderly population will reach 1.2 billion, positioning it fourth globally, following China, India, and the United States. This rise in life expectancy and population aging highlights the success of development, as shown by the steady annual increase in the elderly population (Akbar, Darmiati, Arfan, & Putri, 2021). Aging is a period of adaptation where individuals strive to maintain happiness despite various life changes. Typically, people in this phase are seen as weaker, more dependent, and often less financially secure, which sometimes overshadows the positive aspects that elderly individuals can contribute (Senja & Prasetyo, 2021). These age-related changes are not limited to physical health but also include psychological adjustments. For many elderly individuals, reduced role fulfillment and decreased physical ability affect both their personal and social activities, potentially leading to psychological concerns, including sleep disorders (Kusumawardani & Andanawarih, 2018). Sleep disturbances such as insomnia, hypersomnia, and disrupted sleep-wake cycles are common among the elderly, often stemming from health status, medication use, environmental factors, stress, and lifestyle (Mindianata, 2018). Treatment for sleep disorders generally includes both pharmacological and non-pharmacological options. One effective non-pharmacological approach is Slow Stroke Back Massage (SSBM), which involves gentle massage along the back or shoulders to promote relaxation. SSBM improves blood circulation and triggers vasodilation, helping deliver essential nutrients to cells while facilitating the removal of waste products. This enhances cellular activity, alleviates pain, aids healing, reduces local and joint inflammation, and promotes both physical and psychological relaxation, which can improve sleep quality in the elderly (Wibowo & Ariyani, 2022).

Insomnia is a common issue among the elderly, often resulting from age-related changes, health conditions, and lifestyle factors (Molnar, Frank, Chun, & Lee, 2021). As people age, physical and psychological adjustments, such as reduced mobility, altered social roles, and health conditions like chronic pain or medication effects, can disrupt sleep patterns. Insomnia in elderly individuals is influenced by factors such as health status, medication use, environmental changes, psychological stress, dietary habits, and overall lifestyle (Patel, Steinberg, & Patel, 2018). This condition can lead to significant impacts on well-being, exacerbating issues like fatigue, cognitive decline, mood disturbances, and reduced quality of life. Addressing insomnia in the elderly typically involves both pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions (Nguyen, George, & Brewster, 2019). Non-pharmacological methods, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation exercises, and physical treatments like SSBM, have proven beneficial. These

approaches aim to improve sleep quality without medication side effects, promoting relaxation, reducing stress, and enhancing overall physical and mental health in elderly patients.

The SSBM is a non-pharmacological intervention designed to alleviate insomnia in the elderly through a combination of physiological and psychological mechanisms (Harris, Richards, & Grando, 2012). This massage technique involves gentle, rhythmic strokes applied to the back and shoulders, promoting relaxation and a sense of well-being. Physiologically, SSBM enhances blood circulation and promotes vasodilation, which increases oxygen and nutrient delivery to the tissues while facilitating the removal of metabolic waste products (Jalalodini, Nourian, Saatchi, Kavousi, & Ghaljeh, 2016). This improved circulation helps to alleviate muscle tension and pain, both of which can disrupt sleep. Additionally, the tactile stimulation provided by the massage can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, leading to a decrease in heart rate and blood pressure, further promoting relaxation. Psychologically, the soothing nature of SSBM can reduce stress and anxiety levels, which are often contributors to insomnia. Creating a calming environment and fostering a sense of comfort helps to improve the overall sleep quality of elderly individuals, enabling them to fall asleep more easily and maintain restful sleep throughout the night. The study is aimed to use the massage to deal with the insomnia in elderly.

Case Description

During the assessment conducted from May 26 to 28, 2024, in Mungkid Magelang, the author gathered data on three elderly patients experiencing sleep disturbances. The first patient, Mrs. S, a 70-year-old woman, reported significant difficulty sleeping at night due to worries about her health condition, stating that she never experienced restful sleep. Her medical history indicated hypertension, which can often exacerbate anxiety and contribute to insomnia. The second patient, Mrs. P, who is 80 years old, voiced her struggles with sleep, explaining that frequent coughing kept her awake at night, resulting in her only falling asleep after midnight. She also has a history of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), a condition known to affect sleep quality due to respiratory difficulties. Lastly, Mrs. W, a 72-year-old woman, expressed similar concerns as Mrs. S, indicating that worries about her illness prevented her from achieving restful sleep. Her medical background includes diabetes mellitus, which can also influence sleep patterns through fluctuations in blood sugar levels and associated discomfort. Based on the assessments of these three patients, the nursing diagnoses were established as disturbed sleep patterns related to a lack of sleep control. This diagnosis highlights the various underlying factors affecting their ability to sleep soundly, including health anxieties, respiratory issues, and metabolic disturbances. For effective nursing care, it is essential to address not only the physical aspects of their conditions but also the psychological factors contributing to their sleep disturbances. Implementing interventions such as education about sleep hygiene, relaxation techniques, and potentially incorporating non-pharmacological therapies like Slow Stroke Back Massage may help improve their sleep quality and overall well-being. Focusing on holistic care can support these elderly patients in managing their health concerns and enhancing their sleep patterns, ultimately fostering a better quality of life.

Discussion

The focus of this discussion revolves around addressing basic human needs within primary nursing care, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing these needs for optimal patient outcomes. In a case study conducted in Mungkid Magelang from May 26 to 28, 2024, researchers assessed three elderly clients suffering from insomnia through direct interviews and observations. The participants included Mrs. S (70 years old) with severe insomnia, Mrs. P (80 years old) with moderate insomnia, and Mrs. W (72 years old) also experiencing moderate insomnia. The intervention involved administering a slow stroke back massage for several minutes prior to bedtime, following established Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and using a validated questionnaire to measure insomnia severity. Upon reviewing their health histories, common complaints emerged among the clients, including difficulty sleeping, frequent nocturnal awakenings, and feeling unrefreshed upon waking. The nursing diagnosis identified for these cases was "disturbed sleep patterns related to lack of sleep control," consistent with the Indonesian Nursing Diagnosis Standard under the subcategory D.0055, which describes sleep disturbances due to external factors.

The problem-solving approach employed targeted interventions aimed at preventing complications and enhancing the clients' complaints. The intervention plan focused on addressing the diagnosed sleep pattern disorders and involved the application of non-pharmacological therapy through slow stroke back massage. Implementation of this therapy was conducted over three consecutive days, adhering to the planned nursing actions without encountering significant obstacles, as both clients and their families were cooperative. The evaluation of the interventions utilized the SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan) method, assessing both immediate responses following the intervention and developmental changes the following day. The findings align with existing research which demonstrated the positive impact of Slow Stroke Back Massage on sleep quality (Nur Hasanah & Wibowo, 2021). Similarly, research by Amiruddin et al. (2024) highlighted significant improvements in sleep quality among ischemic stroke patients receiving this treatment. Collectively, these studies reinforce the efficacy of slow stroke back massage as a viable non-pharmacological intervention to enhance sleep quality among various patient populations. Nurses play a crucial role in providing massage therapy as a non-pharmacological intervention to reduce

insomnia, particularly among vulnerable populations such as the elderly (Supriyanti, 2021). Integrating massage techniques into patient care can address the psychological and physiological factors contributing to sleep disturbances. They are trained to assess patients' individual needs, preferences, and underlying health conditions, allowing for a tailored approach to massage therapy. This holistic assessment includes gathering comprehensive health histories, identifying potential contraindications for massage, and recognizing signs of anxiety or discomfort that may exacerbate sleep issues (Maisharoh & Purwito, 2020). Fostering a trusting nurse-patient relationship can create a calming environment that encourages relaxation and openness, essential elements for effective sleep improvement. Furthermore, nurses educate patients on the benefits of massage therapy, ensuring they understand how it may alleviate symptoms of insomnia, such as muscle tension and stress, ultimately empowering them to engage more actively in their own care.

In addition to the therapeutic application of massage techniques, nurses are instrumental in implementing and evaluating massage interventions within the broader context of patient care (Anggraheni & Kristinawati, 2023). They develop and document individualized care plans that include specific massage protocols, such as the slow stroke back massage, which has been shown to promote relaxation and enhance sleep quality. After administering massage therapy, nurses carefully monitor and assess patients' responses, documenting changes in sleep patterns and overall well-being. This evaluation process not only informs future care but also provides valuable feedback for adjusting interventions to better meet patient needs. Collaborating with interdisciplinary teams can advocate for the inclusion of massage therapy as a viable option in treatment plans, emphasizing its role in holistic care (Miladinia, Baraz, Shariati, & Malehi, 2017). Ultimately, through their expertise and compassionate approach, nurses significantly contribute to reducing insomnia in their patients, enhancing their quality of life and promoting a greater sense of well-being.

Conclusion

Dhikr therapy emerges as a valuable non-pharmacological intervention for reducing pain in patients with gout arthritis. The practice, rooted in spiritual mindfulness and reflection, not only facilitates a sense of calm and emotional well-being but also has demonstrated potential in alleviating physical discomfort associated with gout flare-ups. As evidenced by various studies, including the experiences of patients undergoing dhikr therapy, significant reductions in pain levels have been observed, enhancing patients' quality of life and functional capabilities. This holistic approach, which integrates the spiritual, psychological, and physical aspects of health, underscores the importance of addressing the multifaceted nature of pain management in gout arthritis. Incorporating dhikr therapy into nursing care plans offer a more comprehensive and patient-centered approach, empowering individuals to actively engage in their healing process while fostering resilience against the challenges posed by chronic pain. Ultimately, dhikr therapy represents not just a means of pain relief, but also a pathway to greater peace and emotional harmony for those living with gout arthritis.

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