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Research Article

The Effect of Touch Less Spiritual Therapy and Yin Yoga Toward Student's Perceived Stress During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Aims: The COVID-19 pandemic has brought massive changes in our lives. Movement limitation, changes in social interactions, a decrease in learning performance, and changes in learning methods are just a few of the stressors that health students face nowadays. Prolonged stressors will lead to psychological disorders, especially for health students. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga on student perceived stress during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Design: This research was quantitative study using a quasi experimental post-test design.

Methods: The population of this study were all students at STIKES Panti Waluya Malang, a total of 143 people. Based on Slovin formula, 60 samples were obtained which were taken using a simple random sampling technique. Respondents were divided into two groups, namely treatment and control, each group consisted of 30 respondents. The treatment group did touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga five days a week for 6 weeks, while the control group didn't. After 6 weeks, respondents of the two groups were asked to filled Perceived Stress Scale questionnaire. Data collection was carried out in the range of early November 2021 to late January 2022. The data was then processed with trial version of SPSS 26.

Results: Mann-Whitney U Test showed a p value <0.05 (0.03). This means that there was an effect of touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga toward student's perceived stress.

Conclusions: This study showed that during the pandemic, students experienced stress. Both spiritual approach and physical exercise provided through touch less spiritual healing and yin yoga could help students reduced their perceived stress. Further treatment was needed in order to develop our students psychological health so they become a resilient person which prevent them suffered from mental illness during the pandemic.

Keywords

Yin yoga, touch less spiritual therapy, perceived stress

INTRODUCTION

For more than two years, the Covid 19 pandemic has affected various aspects of human life and we are still feeling its effects. The impact

experienced was not only visible physically, but also spiritually and psychologically. The World Health Organization (WHO) has even predicted an escalation in mental health problems, especially stress-related illnesses (1).

Research in Tamil Nadu, India stated that the causes of stress during this pandemic were mainly due to the decline in financial conditions, lockdown, fear of being infected with Covid-19, and not being able to travel freely (2). A study in Paraguay was carried out with a total of 2,206 respondents. The result showed that the Perceived Stress Scale for women who were quarantined reached moderate level. As many as 41.97% of the female respondents experienced anxiety and did not get the necessary psychological health assistance. This condition was most experienced by women who did not have a partner and who live alone (1).

The pandemic also affects our health education process. The lecture activity shifted from face-to-face to virtual, adjustment for practical activities which could not support student skill, plenty task to do, lack of psychology and spiritual support from family were only some stressors which was faced by our student. This negative condition could affect their self-confidence because they felt that they did not get enough knowledge. The etiologies were barrier in expressing their opinion, difficulty attending lectures due to technical problem (signal), pile of assignments during the online learning process meanwhile they didn't catch the topic. Students mostly worked on their assignments individually, they rarely met their friends, and discussion were also carried out online due to the condition. There were differences coping mechanisms used by students when dealing with these stressors, so their perceived stress would also vary. This stress level is higher for female students than male students (3).

As an educator, we need to take a notice to our student mental and spiritual health status. If it was not well treated, their mental health can be disrupted. On the other hand as nurses we have a concept that patient management should be holistic, including bio-psycho-spiritual aspects. There were activities that can balance these aspects and reduce stress levels, for example yoga or taichi. By doing this activity we could balancing the mind, body, and spirit because the body gets positive energy and gets rid of negative energy which were created when our body was under high pressure (stress) or in a negative emotional state (4). Yoga was one of complementary therapy which was preferred as physical activity nowadays. Until now, yoga as a physical activity to reduce stress are still a debate because most of the results have not been scientifically validated, especially related to the type of yoga, duration of practice, and frequency. Nevertheless, many research results describe the positive results of yoga activities (5).

This research combine two interventions, which were yin yoga and touch less spiritual therapy. There are various types of yoga, one of which is Yin Yoga. Yin yoga is a type of yoga that is easy to do, no previous yoga experience was needed, increase body flexibility, and does not take long time. Yin yoga combined with spiritual therapy (e.g. meditation and SEFT) is an intervention that has been shown to reduce stress levels and improve health (6). Jasti's research mentioned that practicing yoga significantly reduce stress level ($p < 0,01$, 95% confidence interval) (7). Spiritual therapy is one of holistic health management to improve coping mechanism. It will influence our



attitudes, emotion, and behavior toward situation. Spiritual care is a part of religious belief which can lead us during difficult time so that reduce anxiety level and stress (8). Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT), is a psychotherapy which combine spiritual and energy field therapy. SEFT itself are known to reduce stress level (9). According to Rachmawati research at Akademi Keperawatan YKY Yogyakarta, applied to 33 students, SEFT practice could decrease student stress's during pandemic due to remote learning ($p=0,001$, $\alpha=0,05$) (10).

This research applied touch less spiritual therapy, which was combination between SEFT and acupressure at Yun men point. SEFT is an integration of spirituality with energy psychology, which achieved through prayer, whole-hearted, and resignation. This technique has been proven by various kinds of scientific research (11). Yun men point is a point in acupressure which is located under clavicle blade. Acupressure application in this point can help to move and disperse Qi energy form lungs, clean external factors such as heat, cold, wind, pain, and eventually help to balance the energy (12). The set up and tune in phase are still implemented as SEFT procedure, but the tapping point was modified. The tapping procedure was replaced by gentle pressure at Yun men point for 10-15 minutes.

Preserving student mental health during the pandemic is challenging because each individual has a different coping mechanism and treatment could not be implemented offline. However, proper precautions are needed to maintain our mental and spiritual health during the pandemic (13). The purpose

of this study was to determine the effect of modified touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga toward perceived stress by health students.

METHODS

This research was quantitative study using a quasi experimental post-test only design, which was held from early December 2021 until late January 2022 at STIKes Panti Waluya Malang. The population was all active student who's listed at SIAKAD, as much as 143 students. By using the Slovin formula, the required number of respondents was 58.8 people, rounded up to 60 respondents. Sampling was done by simple random sampling technique which was then divided into two groups, namely the control and treatment groups, each with 30 respondents. Prior to the research, ethical clearance was obtained as foundation of the research. Before implementation, respondents were given an explanation about the research flow and signed for informed consent. Respondents who were not willing, were allowed to leave the research program and other respondents would be selected using the same sampling technique.

There were two variables in this study, the independent variable was modified touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga, while the dependent variable was student perceived stress. The treatment group received modified touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga training 5 days a week for 6 weeks guided by a certified yoga instructor. At the beginning of the week they would met offline to practice yoga movements and improve body position, and the rest of the week was conducted online via zoom application. Control group only

received flyers containing information on the benefits of touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga and did not receive any treatment.

At the end of the treatment session, both groups were asked to fill out the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) questionnaire, which was given via Google form. The PSS questionnaire (PSS-10) was adopted from Sheldon Cohen (1983), consist of ten questions, and used likert scale from 0 (never), 1 (almost never), 2 (sometimes), 3 (fairly often), 4 (very often). The respondent was asked to choose the answer which represent their condition after treatment. After completing the questions, researcher reverse to the four positively stated item (e.g. 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, 3=1, 4=0) and then sum the score to determine the respondent's perceived stress level. The perceived stress level then categorized into low (0-13), moderate (14-26), and high (27-

40) perceived stress level. The result then processed using univariate analysis to determine the characteristics of the respondents, and continued with independent T-Test analysis using Mann Whitney to determine and compare the effect of the treatment between two groups.

RESULTS

The respondents of this study came from four study programs at STIKes Panti Waluya Malang, which were Diploma III Nursing Program, Diploma IV Health Information Management Program, Bachelor of Pharmacy Program, and Bachelor of Nursing Program. It could be inferred from the table below that the majority respondent was female (76, 7%), and originated from nursing bachelor program (43, 3%).

Table 1.
Participant Demographic

	Variables	Σ	Frequency
Origin	D3 Keperawatan	13	20%
	D4 MIK	9	15%
	S1 Farmasi	13	21,7%
	S1 Keperawatan	26	43,3%
	Total	60	100%
Gender	Male	14	23,3%
	Female	46	76,7%
	Total	60	100%
Perceived Stress Level	<i>Control group</i>		
	Low	0	0%
	Moderate	27	90%
	High	3	10%
	Total	30	
	<i>Treatment group</i>		
	Low	3	10%
	Moderate	27	90%
	High	0	0%
	Total	30	

Table 2.
The Effect of Touch Less Spiritual Therapy and Yin Yoga
Toward Student's Perceived Stress

Variable	Frequency	Min-Max	Mean	Std. Dev	p
Perceived stress level for control group	30	14-29	21,37	3,755	0,03
Perceived stress level for treatment group	30	11-26	18.70	4,268	

The table above shows that $p < 0.05$ (0.03) with 95% significances, there was an effect of touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga toward student's Perceived Stress Scale. There was a difference of PSS score between control and treatment group, which was higher in control group.

DISCUSSION

This research showed that there was an effect of touch less spiritual therapy and yin yoga toward student's Perceived Stress Scale ($p < 0, 05$). For teenagers, going through the Covid-19 pandemic is challenging period, especially with growth and development tasks that must be fulfilled. One of the challenges faced by adolescents is emotional development, where they have to practice managing stress and negative emotions. They also have to deal with the academic achievement, as well as bonding and attachments with classmates which have become very challenging during this pandemic. During the pandemic, student physical activity is also affected. Decreasing in physical activity also affects the psychological and spiritual conditions of students and lead to further problem. Therefore, physical activity is needed which can accommodate all these necessities

during the pandemic. Yoga, in this case yin yoga, is a physical activity that can be used as an alternative.

Yoga is a physical activity that developed from India and is popular in various countries, including Indonesia. Yoga is actually a spiritual practice from 5000 years ago. Yoga combines body movements (asana) with mindfulness of breathing exercises so that physical, psychological, and spiritual meditation activities are achieved. In addition to physical health, yoga is also intended to train flexibility, strength, memory, and fitness. Regular yoga practice has been shown to reduce pain, fatigue, and stress (14).

As previously explained, students experiencing changes in the learning process during the pandemic (15). The infrequent physical encounter during learning will disrupt the emotional bonding among students in their class. Emotional sensitivity and attachment will diminish, and lead to body negative energy escalation. Decreased sensitivity and attachment will take effect to working on group assignments and ultimately on student academic achievement (16).

While doing yin yoga, there are several styles that use special meditation techniques to pacify a stressed mind. Other yoga styles also

focus on deep breathing techniques that are useful for mind-focusing so that it becomes soother. Yoga as an anti-stress is often associated with the body's chemical products, such as a decrease in catecholamine, hormones produced by adrenal glands in response to stress. Yoga also lowers dopamine, norepinephrine, and epinephrine, thereby creating a sense of calm. Some studies have even focused on increasing oxytocin, a hormone associated with relaxing and connecting with others, with yoga. Oxytocin hormone can facilitate attachment between one individual to another while practicing yoga together (17,18).

Not only yin yoga, this research also try to seek another complementary therapy to improve student's spiritual and psychological health. Combination between mindfulness meditation, Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT), and Acupressure at the Yunmen point become the complement. The purpose of mindfulness meditation is to recognize current conditions that make us feel uncomfortable (19). We need to recognize this condition so we are able to provide the right response in the future. After recognizing the problem, the next step were facing it and calming the mind (20). We shall continue the process with repeated prayers, surrender to the Higher Power and give positive suggestions to the body, based on SEFT procedure (21). This helps our mind to get rid of negative thoughts and replace them with positive thoughts. During the SEFT process, tapping on the conventional point was replaced by massage on the Yun men point. In Chinese acupuncture, the Yun men point is known as the point that help balances the body's energy. Yun men point

located under the clavicle blade which has functions to balance energy under stressful condition. By massaging this point for 15 minutes (22), the Qi flow from lungs will come out as well as any unsupportive external conditions of the body (hot, cold, sore) so that the body's energy flow becomes more balanced. In addition, acupuncture at the Yun men point also helps to protect the heart (12,23).

This research combine yin yoga and touch less spiritual therapy. The first procedure was yin yoga sequence, which help to release tension on body's connective tissues (tendons, fascia, and ligaments) to increase circulation between joint and increase flexibility (24). The first five minutes of yin yoga was centering period. During centering the respondents was invited to entered silence, closed their, catch their breath, to concentrate their mind and gave special attention to their body, mind, emotions, and energy levels (25). Yin yoga movements was slower and there was movement restraint. Movement retention for a certain duration could help the practitioner to activate nervous system, give the body muscles time to relax, and also help reduce tension on the body's (26). After relaxing the bodies, we move to the spiritual aspect. The respondents was directed into meditation session for about 10 minutes. SEFT session, set up and tune in phase. The tapping phase was replaced with acupressure at Yun men point. Acupressure at this point will release Qi energy from lungs and assist to balance the body's energy (12). This can help students to release body tension, as well as get closer to the higher power.



CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that students feel stressed during pandemic conditions, majority were at moderate perceived stress level. Giving a combination of yin yoga with touch less spiritual therapy for 6 weeks can reduce the student's perceived stress. It is expected for the students to carry out physical activities or other activities which can support spiritual and psychological health during the pandemic.

Further research for touch less spiritual therapy procedures is still needed. It can be carried out in various conditions to provide better results and generalized broadly. Further research can be carried out with a longer period or other schedule to provide a better result and the benefits obtained also be optimized.

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