The Effect of Benson Relaxation Therapy on Anxiety of Preoperative Patients in the IBS Room of Karanganyar Hospital

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KEYWORD	ABSTRAK
Benson relaxation therapy, anxiety, pre-operative patients	These emotional reactions commonly occur during the preoperative phase, which is part of perioperative nursing and involves initial preparation before entering the operating room. During this period, patients frequently experience psychological changes, including anxiety, fear, and stress, triggered by concerns about the procedure, anesthesia, potential pain, and surgical outcomes. Preoperative anxiety can lead to physiological instability, manifested by increased blood pressure, pulse rate, respiratory rate, nausea, vomiting, and restlessness, all of which may interfere with the surgical process and postoperative recovery. Nursing interventions play an important role in managing preoperative anxiety to ensure patient comfort and surgical readiness. One non-pharmacological intervention that can be applied is Benson's relaxation therapy, which focuses on controlled breathing, mental focus, and relaxation to reduce stress responses. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of Benson's relaxation therapy in reducing anxiety levels in preoperative patients. This final scientific work employed a descriptive design in the form of a case study conducted in the Central Surgical Installation (Instalasi Bedah Sentral, IBS) of Karanganyar Regional General Hospital. The subject of the study was one preoperative patient experiencing anxiety. The intervention was administered according to the standard operating procedure (SOP) for Benson's relaxation therapy, and anxiety levels were measured using the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS). The results showed a decrease in anxiety scores from 25 (moderate anxiety) before the intervention to 17 (mild anxiety) after the therapy, indicating that Benson's relaxation therapy was effective in reducing preoperative anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Surgery or operasi is a medical procedure performed on the body to improve physical function. This procedure is one form of medical treatment that often causes feelings of fear and anxiety (Ayu Dekawaty, 2023; Siswana & Fitriyani, 2022). Anxiety is a state of uneasiness or doubt about something that is going to happen, with an unclear cause or object, often associated with uncertain feelings such as worrying about surgery. There are two main factors that cause a person to experience anxiety. First, predisposing factors include various psychoanalytic theories such as emotional and socio-cultural conflicts, interpersonal theories, family theories, and biological theories (e.g., physical disorders). Second, precipitating factors refer to stressors or triggers that lead to the emergence of anxiety influenced by internal and external elements. Internal factors include age, gender, educational level, occupation, and income (Alfira, 2022; Hulu, 2020; Irma et al., 2022; Rahma, 2023).

Feelings of anxiety can cause physical instability, characterized by increased blood pressure, pulse rate, respiratory rate, nausea or vomiting, and restlessness, all of which can interfere with the surgical process (Irma et al., 2022). In addition, excessive anxiety can lead to hormonal imbalances in the body. High levels of anxiety affect hypothalamic function, which leads to the release of norepinephrine. The release of norepinephrine causes a state of high alertness, resulting in elevated blood pressure (Nofitasari & Irdiyanti, 2023; Rai Bawa et al., 2025). When a person experiences anxiety, the autonomic nervous system is stimulated, activating the adrenal glands to release adrenaline. This increases metabolism and heart rate.

An increased cardiac workload raises blood pressure and may cause the dilation of blood vessels, leading to bleeding during surgery. Consequently, surgeries are often delayed or canceled. This can result in prolonged treatment, higher administrative costs, worsening of the patient's condition, and uncooperative behavior (Darmayanti & Dewi, 2021). Furthermore, anxiety may also heighten postoperative pain, increase depression, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, interfere with wound healing, elevate the need for analgesics, and delay hospital discharge (Amiri, 2020). The prevalence of preoperative anxiety disorder in the United States is reported at 28% in the 9–17 age group, 13% in the 18–54 age group, 16% in those aged 55 years and older, and 11.4% in the elderly population. Globally, it is estimated that 20% of the population suffers from preoperative anxiety disorder (Fortinesh, 2007; Darmayanti & Dewi, 2021).

In Indonesia, the prevalence of anxiety is estimated to reach around 9%–12% of the population (Riskesdas RI, 2013). A study conducted by Bahsoan in 2013 in the operating room of Rumah Sakit Umum Prof. Dr. Hi. Aloei Saboe in Gorontalo City reported that approximately 1.2 million people, or 80%, experienced preoperative anxiety (Darmayanti & Dewi, 2021). One of the nursing interventions that can be used to overcome patient anxiety is Benson's relaxation therapy. Benson's relaxation therapy is a relaxation method that focuses the mind through a combination of individual beliefs and deep breathing. It is a form of subjective stress management that can reduce anxiety levels, improve mood and sleep quality, and alleviate pain (Agustina et al., 2023; Nofitasari & Irdiyanti, 2023).

Benson's relaxation therapy is performed by taking deep breaths accompanied by expressions of the patient's faith and confidence. The goal of Benson's relaxation therapy is to minimize preoperative anxiety (Irma et al., 2022). Relaxation helps relax the muscles and allows the patient to shift attention from anxiety to the activity itself. When the body is in a relaxed state, levels of cortisol and adrenaline decrease, while serotonin and endorphin levels increase. These hormonal changes affect the physiological response by lowering heart rate, reducing anxiety, and promoting calmness (Roxiana, Fauziah, & Prima, 2020). Based on this background, the researchers were interested in applying Benson's relaxation therapy to reduce patients' anxiety levels before surgery.

This study aims to determine the effect of applying Benson's relaxation therapy on the anxiety levels of preoperative patients in the Central Surgical Installation (Instalasi Bedah Sentral, IBS) of Karanganyar Regional General Hospital. Practically, the results of this study

can serve as a reference for nurses in the IBS room to implement simple, safe, and effective nursing interventions to reduce patients' anxiety before surgery.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research design used in this final scientific paper employed a descriptive method in the form of a case study, aiming to determine the outcome of applying Benson's relaxation therapy in reducing the anxiety levels of preoperative patients in the Central Surgical Installation (Instalasi Bedah Sentral, IBS) of Karanganyar Regional General Hospital. The subject of this case study was one preoperative patient who experienced anxiety, selected according to predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The implementation was carried out on December 4, 2025, using the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Benson's relaxation therapy and the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the assessment, data were obtained from patient An. A, aged 14 years and 9 months, a male, who reported feeling anxious and afraid about the first surgery he would undergo. The patient also complained of dizziness and difficulty sleeping. Objective data showed that the patient appeared restless, tense, and trembling. Preoperative vital signs were as follows: TD 122/76 mmHg, HR 114 beats per minute, RR 24 breaths per minute, T 37°C, and SpO_2 100%. Anxiety levels were measured using the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS) with a score of 25, indicating moderate anxiety.

Based on these signs and symptoms, the nursing diagnosis of anxiety was identified as related to a situational crisis (D.0080). The nursing intervention applied was Benson's relaxation therapy. Benson's relaxation therapy is a subjective stress management technique that can reduce anxiety, improve mood, enhance sleep quality, and relieve pain (Nofitasari & Irdiyanti, 2023). It is a relaxation method that focuses the mind by incorporating individual beliefs. Benson's relaxation therapy helps relax the body, relieve tension caused by anxiety, pain, or stress, and reduce perceived threats (Irma et al., 2022).

The implementation of this therapy was carried out on December 4, 2025—three hours before surgery—and conducted twice. The therapy followed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Benson's relaxation therapy and lasted 10–15 minutes. The nursing actions included assessing patient complaints, monitoring vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, and body temperature), determining anxiety levels, regulating room temperature, creating a calm and comfortable environment, explaining the purpose and benefits of Benson's relaxation therapy, teaching and guiding the patient to perform the technique, evaluating patient responses, reassessing anxiety levels, and conducting post-intervention evaluations.

The results of the implementation showed that symptoms and signs of anxiety were reduced. This is evidenced by subjective data from patients who reported a decrease in worry/fear and felt calmer and more comfortable. Meanwhile, objective data show that the results of the implementation show that symptoms and signs of anxiety are reduced. This is evidenced by subjective data from patients who reported a decrease in worry/fear and felt calmer and more comfortable. Meanwhile, objective data showed that Anxiety decreased, tension decreased, trembling decreased, Blood Pressure: 110/68 mmHg (decreased), Pulse: 92 times/min (decreased), Respiratory Frequency: 20 times/minute (decreased), and anxiety levels decreased to mild with a score of 17.

Benson's relaxation therapy works by inhibiting sympathetic nervous system activity, which reduces oxygen consumption and relaxes muscles, thereby promoting calmness and comfort. When relaxation occurs, the parasympathetic system becomes dominant, helping the patient feel more comfortable while alleviating mental symptoms such as anxiety, depression,

and fatigue (Abu Maloh et al., 2022; Feyzi et al., 2016; Kiani et al., 2017; Morabad et al., 2022). The focus of Benson's relaxation therapy in this study was to reduce the patient's anxiety level. The nursing intervention showed a notable decrease in anxiety from moderate (score 25) to mild (score 17).

These findings align with Talitha and Relawati (2023), who stated that Benson's relaxation therapy is effective in reducing patients' anxiety levels prior to surgery. Supporting evidence from Irma et al. (2022) further confirms that Benson's relaxation therapy, as a non-pharmacological method, successfully decreases preoperative anxiety in patients, demonstrating its effectiveness as an intervention.

CONCLUSION

After conducting assessments, establishing nursing diagnoses, developing interventions, implementing, and evaluating the application of Benson's relaxation therapy in preoperative patients, it was found that the patient exhibited symptoms and signs of anxiety such as feeling anxious, afraid, difficulty sleeping, dizziness, restlessness, tension, trembling, increased blood pressure, elevated pulse, and increased respiratory rate.

This was supported by a HARS score of 24, indicating that the patient experienced moderate anxiety. The patient's anxiety was related to the anticipation of undergoing surgery. The nursing intervention designed to address this condition was Benson's relaxation therapy, aimed at reducing the patient's anxiety level. The intervention was carried out twice and resulted in reduced anxiety symptoms and a decrease in the HARS score from 24 (moderate anxiety) to 17 (mild anxiety). Non-pharmacological Benson's relaxation therapy effectively reduced the patient's preoperative anxiety level, demonstrating its potential as an effective method for lowering anxiety in preoperative patients.

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