

## EFFECT OF THERAPEUTIC TOUCH ON DEPRESSION AMONG ELDERLY AT SELECTED OLD AGE HOME, COIMBATORE

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### ABSTRACT

#### *Aim and Objective*

*To assess the Effect of therapeutic touch on depression among elderly.*

#### *Methodology*

*Quasi experimental one group pre test and post test design was adopted for the present study conducted at St. Joseph old age home, Coimbatore. Using purposive sampling technique 28 subjects, who had mild and moderate depression were selected by using Geriatric depression scale. Therapeutic Touch procedure was administered for each elderly over a month period. After the intervention, the level of depression was reassessed using same scale. Pre and post-test on level of depression was assessed and Paired 't' test was used to find out the effect of Therapeutic Touch on depression among elderly.*

#### *Results*

*The analysis of the study findings revealed before intervention it was found that 54% of them had mild depression and 46% had moderate level of depression. After administering Therapeutic Touch, 79% of elderly were moved to normal, 18% of elderly had mild depression and 3% had moderate depression. The difference in the scores revealed that their level of depression reduced after intervention. The mean score on the level of depression among elderly before and after Therapeutic Touch was 8.7 and 4.03 with the standard deviation of 1.66 and 1.63 respectively. The mean difference was 4.67. The calculated 't' value (17.84\*) was compared with the table value at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated 't' value was greater than the table value.*

#### *Conclusion*

*Hence there is a significant difference in the level of depression before and after implementation of Therapeutic Touch. The result shows that there exists a significant effect of Therapeutic Touch on depression among elderly.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Level of Depression, Therapeutic Touch, Effect, Elderly*

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### INTRODUCTION

Old age in human beings is a series of continuous process that begins with life and continues throughout the life cycle. Worldwide, life expectancy is increasing from 55 to 65 years. But increasing life expectancy does not mean a healthy improvement in human life, because more health problems like Alzheimer's disease, Dementia, Depression, chronic pain, physical disabilities are common during old age. Among these, depression or the occurrence of depressive symptomatology is prominent among older people (Lyons, 2005).

Various treatment modalities are available to treat depressive symptomatology in elderly. Therapeutic Touch is one among them which is used to reduce depression. It is a bio field or energy based therapy of the “Kreigr-kunz” method. Therapeutic Touch practices are becoming more prevalent as conformed by Eisenberg and colleagues (1998). The use of energy healing has increased for various health problems like pain, nausea, headaches and depression (Anne, 2007).

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Old age is often characterized as a period of multiple losses, loneliness, declining physical and mental functioning and restricted cognitive abilities. Among this depression can be quite common as ageing presents its own set of challenges. Depression is a potentially devastating illness estimated to affect more than 340 million individuals. The features of depression are prolonged sadness, irritability, worry, agitation, anxiety, pessimism, loss of energy, feelings of guilt and worthlessness, inability to concentrate, and recurring thoughts of death or dying. The impact on quality of life is all-encompassing because it can lead individuals to withdraw from daily activities and relationships. Factors that increase the risk of depression in the elderly include single, unmarried, divorced, or widowed, lack of a supportive social network, stressful life events (Rosenbaum & Jennifer, 2006).

The mechanism by which Therapeutic Touch may affect the body is theorized that healing touch affects patients through the connection of energy fields within and outside of the physical body. The treatment of symptoms is thought to occur when the movement of energy stimulates internal mechanisms. Depression results in disconnection from self, others and the world. Therapeutic touch provides opportunity for patients to experience safety, trust, and positive anticipation in order to connect with self, others and the world. Therapeutic Touch is asserted to have varying positive effects on different body systems, like the autonomic nervous system, lymphatic, circulatory and musculoskeletal systems. In endocrine system, it lowers the stress hormone cortisol and increases the good hormone oxytocin (Marta, 2009).

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Assess the level of depression among elderly.
- Administer Therapeutic touch among elderly with depression.
- Assess the level of depression among elderly after administration of Therapeutic Touch.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

H<sub>1</sub>: There will be a significant difference in the level of depression after implementation of Therapeutic Touch.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Conceptualization is a process of forming ideas which utilizes and forms a conceptual framework for the study. It is the abstract, logical structure which enables the researcher to link the findings to the nursing body of knowledge. A framework is the abstract of logical structure of meaning that guides the development of the study and the body of knowledge.

Conceptual framework used for this study is based on general system theory. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1968) introduced system theory as a universal theory that could be applied to many field of study.

The conceptual framework focused on following components

**Input**

Input begins with establishing rapport with the elderly. In this phase nurse researcher collects the necessary information on demographic data and assess the level of depression among elderly using Geriatric Depression Scale. Then the elderly with mild, moderate, and severe depression were selected for providing Therapeutic Touch treatment.

**Throughput**

It is the use of input such as establishing rapport, demographic data of elderly, energy matter and information for the maintenance of the homeostasis of the system. It is a series of action by which the system converts its energy input from the environment into products and services that are usable by the system. Researcher in this study implements Therapeutic Touch technique among elderly in which healers hands are placed on or above the recipient body and strong energy is transferred from healers hand to recipient body surface to reduce depression. Each session lasts for 10 minutes and 8 sessions are administered in one month duration as individual therapy.

**Output**

Output is outcome of the system. It refers to energy, information or material as a result of throughput. Energy and information are continuously processed through system and released as output. In this study output expected is decrease in level of Depression among elderly.

**Feedback**

It refers to the process by which information is received at each stage of the system and is feedback as input to guide its evaluation. In this study it refers to the effect of Therapeutic touch on Depression among elderly.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BASED ON GENERAL SYSTEM’S THEORY BY LUDWIG VON BERTALANFFY (1968)**

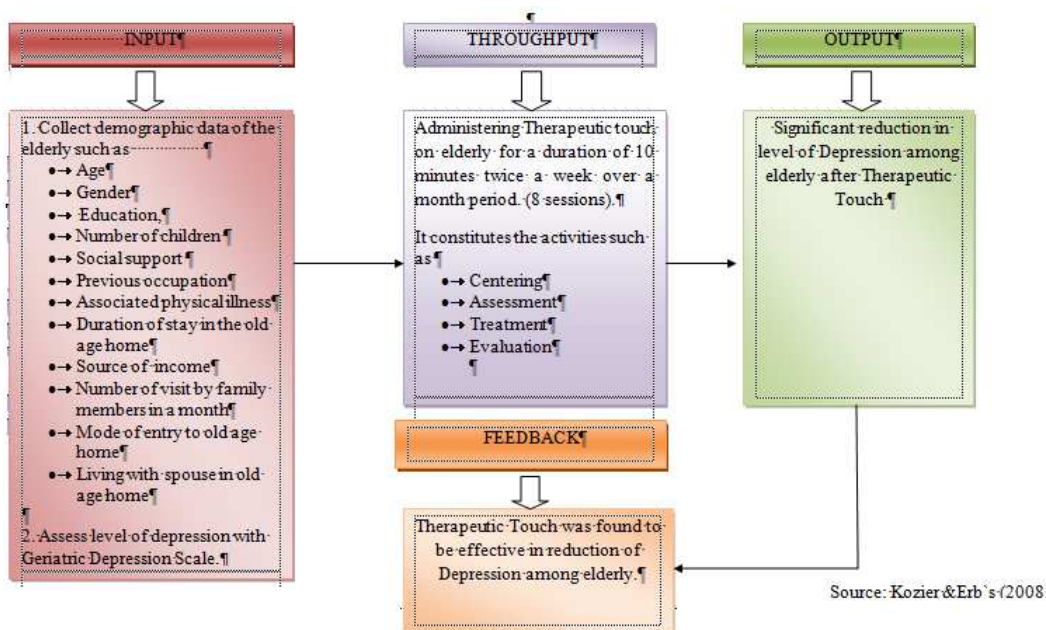


Figure 1

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative experimental research approach has been used for this study. The research design used for this study is quasi experimental one group pre test and post test design to evaluate the effect of Therapeutic Touch on depression among elderly.

The study was conducted at St. Joseph Old age Home in Coimbatore. Total numbers of inmates resided in old age home were 129 among them 51 were males and 78 were females. From this population, 53 elderly participants were found to be terminally ill and bed ridden and 4 were suffering from infectious skin diseases. These 57 participants were excluded under exclusion criteria and the rest of 72 participants were administered Geriatric depression scale to identify the level of depression. Using purposive sampling technique 28 subjects, who had mild and moderate depression, were selected for the study. Therapeutic Touch procedure was administered for 10 minutes of duration for each elderly over a month period. After the intervention, the level of depression was reassessed using same scale.

Content validity and reliability of data collection tool

### Validity

This tool demonstrated content validity by comparing scores from three depression scales used. Geriatric Depression Scale, Sheehan Disability Scale and Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression, were  $r = 0.82$ ,  $r = 0.69$  and  $r = 0.83$ , respectively, all of them being statistically significant (all  $p < .001$ ).

### Reliability

The results for the test-retest reliability of the GDS with institutionalized elderly was high (0.94) and alpha coefficient found to be 0.99.

### Geriatric Depression Scale (J. A. Yesavage, 1982)

The Geriatric depression scale (GDS) developed in the year 1982 by J. A. Yesavage. The scale consist of 15-item administered to the elderly people individually and asked to answer “Yes or NO” based on how person have felt over past week.

### Score Interpretation

0-4: normal, 5-8: mild depression, 9-11: moderate depression, 12-15: severe depression.

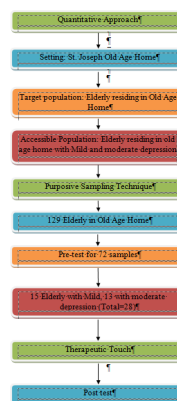


Figure 2: Schematic Representation of Research Design

## DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

### ASSESSMENT OF PRE AND POST-TEST LEVEL OF DEPRESSION AMONG ELDERLY

### DISTRIBUTION ON THE LEVEL OF DEPRESSION BEFORE AND AFTER ADMINISTERING THERAPEUTIC TOUCH (N=28)

Table 1

Level of Depression	Before Intervention		After Intervention	
	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Normal	-	-	22	79
Mild	15	54	05	18
Moderate	13	46	01	03
Severe	-	-	-	-

The above table shows the distribution of level of depression before and after Therapeutic Touch among 28 elderly. Before intervention it was found that 54% of them had mild depression and 46% had moderate level of depression. After administering Therapeutic Touch, 79% of elderly were moved to normal, 18% of elderly had mild depression and 3% had moderate depression. The difference in the scores revealed that their level of depression reduced after intervention.

### ANALYSIS ON EFFECT OF THERAPEUTIC TOUCH

Paired 't' test was used to find out the effect of Therapeutic Touch on depression among elderly.

**The Mean, Standard deviation and 't' value on the level of Depression among Elderly before and after Therapeutic Touch.**

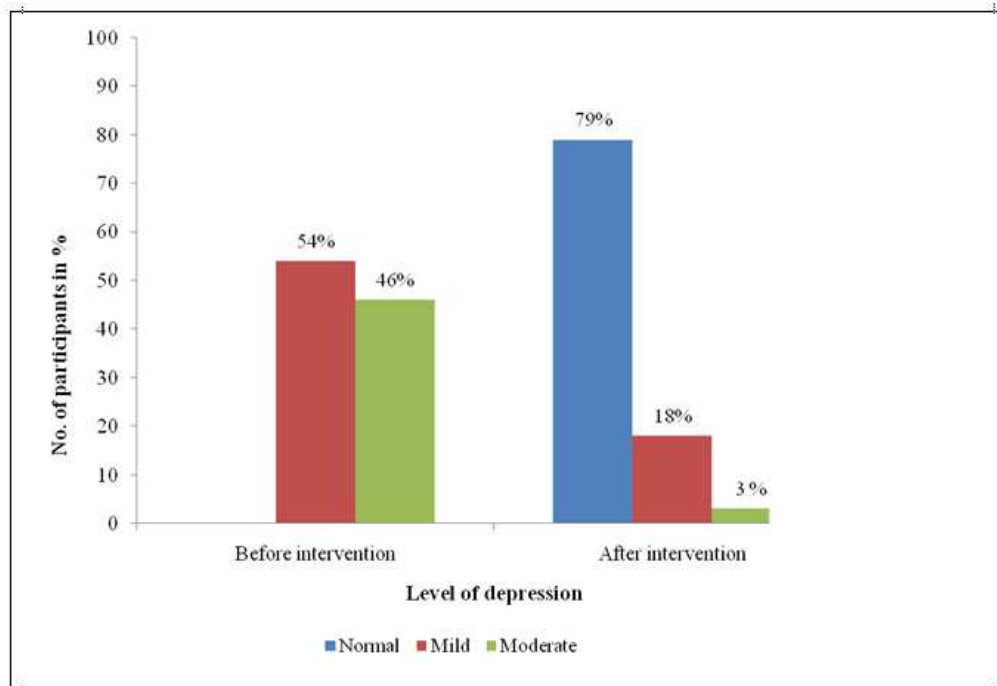
(N=28)

Table 2

Test	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean percentage (%)	Mean difference	't'
Before intervention	8.7	1.66	58	4.67	17.84*
After intervention	4.03	1.63	26.86		

**\*Significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level**

The mean score on the level of depression among elderly before and after Therapeutic Touch was 8.7 and 4.03 with the standard deviation of 1.66 and 1.63 respectively. The mean difference was 4.67. The calculated 't' value (17.84\*) was compared with the table value at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated 't' value was greater than the table value. Thus the hypothesis "There will be a significant difference in the level of depression before and after implementation of Therapeutic Touch" was accepted. Hence there exists a significant effect of Therapeutic touch on Depression among elderly.



**Figure 3: Comparison on the Level of Depression before and After Therapeutic Touch**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the present study arrived after an in-depth analysis of the data gathered. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to analyse the data and test the hypothesis.

### Assessment on Level of Depression Among Elderly Before Therapeutic Touch

Level of depression among elderly was assessed by using the Geriatric Depression Scale and level of depression scores were analysed under following categories namely mild, moderate and severe depression. The total mean percentage of the level of depression scores before intervention was 58% with total mean and standard deviation of  $8.7 \pm 1.66$ .

### Administering Therapeutic Touch to Elderly With Mild and Moderate Depression

After assessing the level of depression, Therapeutic Touch was administered to elderly with mild and moderate depression. Therapeutic Touch is an intervention in which healer hands placed on or above the recipient body and strong energy is transferred from healer hands to recipient body surface to reduce depression among elderly. Each session lasts for 10 minutes and 8 sessions are administered in one month as individual therapy.

### Analysis on Level of Depression Before and After Therapeutic Touch

After imparting Therapeutic Touch the level of depression was assessed using the same tool. The present study shows that the mean score of level of depression was reduced from 8.7 to 4.03 with the standard deviation of 1.66 and 1.63 respectively. The calculated 't' value 17.84 was significant at 0.05 level. So there is a significant difference in the level of depression before and after implementation of Therapeutic Touch. The result shows that there exists a significant effect of Therapeutic Touch on depression among elderly.

The total mean of the depression score was reduced from 8.7 to 4.03. Before the intervention 54% of elderly had mild and 46% of elderly had moderate depression and after the intervention, 79% of the participants become normal, 18% of elderly improved from moderate to mild depression and 3% of elderly remained in the state of moderate depression, but there is improvement in their exact scores. This proves that Therapeutic Touch is effective in reducing level of depression among elderly. This is in line with the study conducted by Marta, et. al., (2010), where there was a reduction in depression after administering Therapeutic Touch to elderly.

### **Testing Hypothesis**

The calculated 't' value 17.84 was found to be significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level. Hence the hypothesis **"There will be a significant difference in the level of depression before and after the implementation of Therapeutic Touch"** is accepted. This proves that Therapeutic Touch is effective in reducing level of depression among elderly.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The study was undertaken to evaluate the effect of Therapeutic Touch on depression among elderly. The conceptual framework of the study was based upon Ludwig von and Bertalanffy's General System Theory (1968). The present study was conducted at St. Joseph old age home Coimbatore. A quasi experimental one group pre-test post-test design was adopted and purposive sampling technique was used to select the study samples. Total number of elderly selected for the study was 28. A pre-test was administered using the Geriatric Depression Scale to assess the level of depression among elderly. After that, Therapeutic Touch was administered. Post test was done using the same scale. The results revealed that there was a significant reduction in the level of depression. Hence, it was concluded that Therapeutic Touch is effective on depression among elderly.

### **Major Findings of the Study**

- 39% of the elderly, who belongs to the age group of 71-80 years reported increased rate of depression (moderate depression 54%) when compared, to any other age group.
- Females (64%) were having more depression (mild depression 69% & moderate depression 78%) than compare to males.
- 54% of elderly who brought by force to old age home, were having more depression (66%) than those who come to old age home voluntarily.
- Elderly, who were staying for less than 1 year and 1-3 year, were having more depression when compared to those who were staying more than 4 years.
- The study shows that the level of depression was found to be reduced from the mean score of 8.7 to 4.03 after Therapeutic Touch.
- 79% of elderly moved from mild and moderate depression to normal after Therapeutic Touch intervention.
- The study shows that Therapeutic Touch was effective in reducing level of depression from reduction of mean percentage 58 to 26.86.



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