



A STUDY TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BENSON'S RELAXATION THERAPY ON REDUCTION OF STRESS AMONG PRIMIGRAVID MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT

Pregnancy and childbirth are normal life events, yet women are exposed to a significant amount of stress. The reasons for unhappiness in some women's lives are related to poor socio-economic status, lack of social support and domestic violence. Many mothers also experience unnecessary distress and anxiety simply because they did not anticipate or did not know about the normal psychological upheavals, emotional changes and the adjustments required that are integral to the childbearing process. A decreased maternal workload, family spacing, availability of rest and easy access to supportive people and environmental resources are perceived as markers of good health. How one reacts to stress depends on how one perceives the stressful event, the stressor or the degrees of change caused by it, and one's ability to adapt which is determined by one's health, genetic endowment and available coping mechanisms. Herbert Benson MD, is the father of modern mind-body medicine. From the late 1960 onwards he demonstrated that the relaxation response, which brings about bodily changes that decrease heart rate, lower metabolism, decrease the rate of breathing and bring the body back into what is probably a healthier balance.

Keywords: Primigravid mother, Benson's relaxation therapy, Stress

Aim:

The study attempt to assess the effectiveness of Benson's relaxation therapy on reduction of stress among primigravid mothers attending the outpatient department in a selected hospital at Kannur, with the objectives of evaluating the stress among the primigravid mothers before and after the Benson's relaxation therapy and to associate the level of stress with selected demographic variables.

Methods and Materials: A total of 30 primigravid mothers after third month of gestation were selected for the study. The information regarding background data were collected from the primigravid mothers by self-administered rating scale and the level of hemoglobin status was noted from the health records. Selected primigravid mothers were given pretest questionnaire and Benson's relaxation therapy was administered to all group members for 20 minutes and instructed to continue this for a period of 15 days. Post-test using rating scale was conducted 15 days after the administration of Benson's relaxation therapy.

Result: The result of the study shows that the post-test mean stress score was less than the pre-test mean stress score. The obtained mean difference between the pre-test and post-test regarding stress score was statistically significant. Hence research hypothesis “there will be a significant difference in the stress scores before and after Benson's relaxation therapy among the primigravid mothers” has been retained.

Conclusions: It was inferred that primigravid mothers who practiced Benson's relaxation therapy had significant decrease in post-test stress score. Also there was significant association with the level of stress and some demographic variables.

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