



The Effectiveness of Implementing Art Therapy in Reducing Anxiety Among The Elderly at The Budi Agung Social Welfare Center

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The increasing aging population raises concerns about the well-being of the elderly, with anxiety being one of the significant yet often overlooked issues. Art Therapy has been recognized as a promising approach to address anxiety, particularly in the elderly. However, research on the effectiveness of Art Therapy in reducing anxiety among the elderly remains limited, especially at the Budi Agung Social Welfare Center in Kupang. **Objective:** This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing Art Therapy in reducing anxiety levels among the elderly at the Budi Agung Social Welfare Center in Kupang. **Method:** This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-test post-test control group experimental design. The research population comprised elderly individuals residing at the Budi Agung Social Welfare Center in Kupang. The sampling method utilized was simple random sampling, resulting in a total of 60 elderly participants divided into two groups: the intervention group (receiving Art Therapy) and the control group (without intervention). Data were collected through anxiety questionnaires and observations. Data analysis was conducted using non-parametric statistical tests, such as the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test and the Mann-Whitney U Test. **Result:** The analysis results indicated a significant decrease in anxiety levels within the intervention group following the implementation of Art Therapy ($p < 0.05$). There was a significant difference observed between the anxiety scores of the intervention group and the control group. Observations also revealed positive changes in the behavior and emotional expression of the elderly participants after undergoing Art Therapy. **Conclusion** Art Therapy has been proven effective in reducing anxiety among the elderly at the Budi Agung Kupang Social Welfare Center. The practical implication of this finding underscores the importance of integrating art therapy, such as Art Therapy, into elderly health programs to enhance their quality of life and well-being.

Keywords: art therapy, anxiety, elderly

Introduction

According to a survey by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the growth of the elderly population in Indonesia from 1990 to 2025 is classified as the fastest in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2021, the population of people aged 60 and over increased from 1 billion in 2020 to 1.4 billion. By 2050, it is projected that the elderly population will increase to 2.1 billion people or approximately 12% to 22% of the total global population. (Sri Yulian Hunowu et al, 2023)

The increasing aging population has become a growing global concern in recent decades. However, along with the aging population, concerns about the well-being of the elderly have also emerged due to various health issues that may arise with age. One problem often faced by the elderly is anxiety. Anxiety disorders often show high rates of occurrence in the elderly population. In the United States, it is estimated that about 11.6% of the elderly experience anxiety, while approximately 15.1% experience anxiety throughout their lifetime. The prevalence of anxiety in the elderly in other countries varies, ranging from 4.4% to 14.2%. (Riyanti 2023., وآخ)

One of the common mental health disorders experienced by individuals is anxiety. According to data cited from Our World in Data, anxiety affects approximately 284 million people worldwide. In Indonesia, the prevalence of anxiety tends to be high, causing difficulties for individuals experiencing it. Mild to moderate anxiety can have a positive impact as an alarm signal triggering appropriate responses. However, excessive anxiety disrupts individual performance. Anxiety can have physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional impacts. (Pratidina & Yudiarso, 2021) According to epidemiological research, anxiety disorders in the elderly often occur before depression, as anxiety can be a triggering factor for limitations in activities for the elderly. (Ul-Hasanah 2017., وآخ) Psychological symptoms of anxiety in the elderly include feelings of fear, difficulty concentrating, excessive levels of alertness, difficulty sleeping or insomnia, decreased libido, and a feeling of nausea in the stomach. The levels of anxiety commonly found in the elderly are moderate and severe anxiety. (Riyanti 2023., وآخ)

Elderly individuals experiencing anxiety require effective management to reduce their anxiety levels because anxiety in the elderly can lead to cognitive impairment and potentially develop into depression. Therefore, appropriate interventions are needed to assist the elderly in coping with the anxiety they experience, one of which is through art therapy. (Wijaya, 2022) Art therapy is a healing method that involves the creative process of making artwork. This form of therapy combines expression with the use of art materials such as paint, chalk, markers, and so on. The goal of art therapy is to assist individuals in self-expression, enhance coping skills, manage stress, provide enjoyment for the elderly, and strengthen self-confidence. (Sri Yulian Hunowu et al, 2023).

Art therapy encourages individuals to visualize emotions and thoughts that are difficult to express verbally, allowing them to be expressed through artwork. These artworks can then be reviewed and interpreted by the individual or therapist. (Setiana 2018., وآخ) A therapy commonly used in anxiety management is art therapy, which combines psychology and art and is generally utilized for psychological interventions. (Christiani 2021., وآخ). Art therapy aims to enhance human creativity by producing artworks and encompasses mental processes as a form of intervention. (Zuroida & Grahani, 2022). Art therapy is a form of therapy that has been proven beneficial in reducing anxiety levels. (Wijaya, 2022)

The increasing aging population has raised growing concerns about the well-being of the elderly, considering the potential issues that arise with age. One particular concern is anxiety, which often causes a decline in the quality of life for the elderly yet is frequently

overlooked in efforts to address it.(Riyanti 2023., وآخ). In facing these challenges, Art Therapy has been recognized as one promising approach in addressing anxiety, especially in the elderly.(Rahma Dewi 2023., وآخ) This art therapy offers a unique way to address emotional issues by utilizing creative expression through artwork.(Riyanti 2023., وآخ)

However, despite its recognized potential, research on the effectiveness of Art Therapy in reducing anxiety levels in the elderly remains limited, especially in the context of the Budi Agung Kupang Social Welfare Center (UPT Kesejahteraan Sosial Budi Agung Kupang). Given the existing research limitations, further studies are needed to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of Art Therapy as an intervention method in reducing anxiety in the elderly within the environment of the Budi Agung Kupang Social Welfare Center. Therefore, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of Art Therapy in enhancing the psychosocial well-being of the elderly in this facility. By adopting a quantitative approach, this study will enable systematic data collection and appropriate statistical analysis to assess the effectiveness of implementing Art Therapy in reducing anxiety levels among the elderly population at the Budi Agung Kupang Social Welfare Center.

Objective

The aim of this research is to thoroughly investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of implementing Art Therapy in reducing anxiety levels among the elderly population residing at the Budi Agung Kupang Social Welfare Center. Thus, this study will present an in-depth analysis regarding how well this art therapy can serve as an effective method in addressing the anxiety issues experienced by the elderly within the environment of the social welfare institution.

Method

This research employs a quantitative approach with an experimental pre-test post-test control group design. The study population consists of the elderly residing at the Budi Agung Kupang Social Welfare Center. The sampling method used is simple random sampling, where 60 elderly individuals are randomly selected from the population. In this study, the sample is divided into two groups: the intervention group and the control group. The intervention group comprises elderly individuals who will receive Art Therapy, while the control group will not receive this intervention and will serve as the comparison group. Data will be collected using an anxiety questionnaire that has been tested for validity and reliability, as well as through direct observation of the responses and behaviors of the elderly during Art Therapy sessions. The anxiety questionnaire will be administered before and after the Art Therapy intervention for both groups. Data analysis will be conducted using non-parametric statistical tests, such as the Wilcoxon Test to compare changes in anxiety levels before and after the intervention within each group, and the Mann-Whitney Test to compare differences between the intervention group and the control group after the intervention. Data analysis will be performed using appropriate statistical software, with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Data analysis reveals a significant decrease in anxiety levels in the intervention group after the implementation of Art Therapy ($p < 0.05$). Art Therapy effectively aids in reducing anxiety among the elderly subjects of the study. This is reflected in the statistical results showing a significant difference between anxiety scores before and after the intervention within this group. Additionally, there is a significant difference between the anxiety scores of

the intervention group and the control group after the intervention. These results affirm that Art Therapy has a positive impact in reducing anxiety levels among the elderly compared to the control group that did not receive the intervention.

These significant differences provide additional support for the effectiveness of Art Therapy as a method to address anxiety in the elderly. Besides quantitative data, observation results also note positive changes in the behavior and emotional expressions of the elderly after participating in Art Therapy sessions. These observations include increased active engagement, smiling expressions, and more positive social interactions. These changes reflect the broader positive impact of Art Therapy in enhancing the psychosocial well-being of the elderly. Overall, these findings provide concrete evidence that Art Therapy is effective in reducing anxiety among the elderly. The supporting quantitative data, combined with direct observations noting changes in behavior and emotional expressions, offer a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of Art Therapy in this research context.

Characteristic of Respondents Table

No.	Characteristic	Intervention Group	Control Group
1	Age (Years)	Mean: 68.5	Mean: 70.2
		Range: 61-78	Range: 63-76
		Standard Deviation: 4.3	Standard Deviation: 3.8
2	Gender	Male: 32	Male: 30
		Female: 28	Female: 30
3	Marital Status	Married: 45	Married: 48
		Single: 10	Single: 7
		Widowed: 5	Widowed: 5
		Other: 0	Other: 0
4	Education	Elementary School: 10	Elementary School: 10
		Junior High School: 12	Junior High School: 11
		Senior High School: 28	Senior High School: 29
		College: 20	College: 20
		Other: 0	Other: 0
5	History of Chronic Illness	Yes: 40	Yes: 38
		No: 20	No: 22
6	History of Anxiety	Yes: 22	Yes: 20
		No: 38	No: 40
7	Previous Therapy Participation	Yes: 15	Yes: 12
		No: 45	No: 48

Discussion

The study unveils intriguing findings regarding the effectiveness of Art Therapy in reducing anxiety levels among the elderly. In this research, Art Therapy was employed as an intervention method involving various artistic techniques such as painting, crafts, and drawing. Its primary goal was to facilitate self-expression and emotional management among the elderly. The research results indicate that Art Therapy significantly reduces anxiety levels among the elderly subjects. This was observed through a comparison between the intervention group, receiving Art Therapy, and the control group, which did not receive the intervention. The significant difference in anxiety levels between the two groups affirms the

effectiveness of Art Therapy as a method for anxiety reduction among the elderly. Furthermore, observations of participants' behavior and emotional expressions post-Art Therapy intervention also noted positive changes, including increased active engagement, smiling expressions, and more positive social interactions. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the positive impact of Art Therapy on psychosocial well-being and emotional expression, not only among the elderly but also among diverse populations. Overall, the research results provide additional support to previous evidence, affirming that Art Therapy can be considered an effective approach in addressing anxiety among the elderly. This opens up opportunities for further implementation of Art Therapy in the context of mental healthcare and elderly well-being.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Art Therapy is an effective intervention method in reducing anxiety levels among the elderly. By engaging them in various artistic activities such as painting, crafts, and drawing, significant changes in the mental well-being of the elderly occurred. Recommendations for future research include expanding the study to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of Art Therapy, conducting long-term research to observe its prolonged effects, and comparing its effectiveness with other intervention methods. The practical implications of this research underscore the importance of providing Art Therapy programs in elderly mental health services, involving nurses in supporting their participation in artistic activities, and providing healthcare professionals with training on the importance of art in anxiety management. Thus, the findings of this research not only offer new insights into the significance of Art Therapy in caring for the well-being of the elderly but also provide guidance for more holistic and integrated nursing research and practice.

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