

The Effectiveness of the Nareswari Method (Breathing, Relaxation, and Coloring) on Reducing Anxiety Levels in Postpartum Mothers

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article history

Received (30 September 2024)

Revised (5 October 2024)

Accepted (10 Oktober 2024)

Keywords

Hypnobreastfeeding, coloring, Relaxation, Postpartum blues, postpartum anxiety

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The postpartum period is a period of adaptation that is quite difficult for a mother. Various complaints can arise during the postpartum period, both physical and psychological complaints. The hormonal changes after childbirth and the adaptation to a new role as a mother often lead to mood swings, feelings of sadness, and increased sensitivity. Many postpartum mothers report emotional disturbances, feeling more sensitive, easily crying, anxious, incapable of caring for their baby, and blaming themselves. These symptoms are usually called postpartum blues. The still high rate of postpartum blues in the world, namely 70-80%, and the rate of postpartum blues in Indonesia, namely 60-70%, shows that the mental health problems of postpartum mothers require special attention. The results of a preliminary study at the Mrican Community Health Center, Kediri City, showed that 70% of 52 postpartum mothers (36 respondents) experienced anxiety during the postpartum period. In Indonesia, postpartum blues is still considered normal and does not require special treatment, even though this problem has a high impact on the welfare of postpartum mothers and their babies.

Objectives: The aim of this research is to determine the effectiveness of the Nareswari method (Breathing, Relaxation, and Coloring) in reducing the anxiety level of postpartum mothers as an effort to prevent cases of postpartum blues. The Nareswari method is a combination of hypnobreastfeeding techniques and coloring therapy (coloring).

Methods: This type of research is observational analytical experimental research with a case-control approach with two groups, pre and post treatment. The independent variables are hypnobreastfeeding and coloring hypnosis. The dependent variable is the level of anxiety of postpartum mothers and the number of samples in this study was 50 respondents.

Results: The results of statistical tests show a significant difference between the level of anxiety in the treatment group and the control group (p -value = 0.0000 < α value 0.05).

Conclusions: The Nareswari method is effective in reducing anxiety levels in postpartum mothers. There was a significant reduction in anxiety levels after postpartum mothers routinely used this method for one month.

Introduction

The postpartum period is a challenging adaptation phase for mothers. During this time, physical changes occur as the organs return to their pre



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-pregnancy state, along with psychological changes due to the new role of being a mother. Various complaints can arise during the postpartum period, including both physical and psychological issues. Postpartum hormonal changes and the adjustment to the new maternal role often lead mothers to experience mood swings and feelings of sadness. Many postpartum mothers report emotional disturbances, feeling more sensitive, easily crying, anxious, incapable of caring for their baby, and blaming themselves. These symptoms are commonly referred to as postpartum blues (Tarisa et al., 2020).

High prevalence of postpartum blues globally, ranging from 70-80%, and the prevalence in Indonesia, which is between 60-70%, indicate that the mental health issues faced by postpartum mothers require special attention (Widyawati, 2017; Sulistia, 2024). A preliminary study conducted at the Mrican Health Center in Kediri revealed that out of 52 postpartum mothers, 70% (36 respondents) experienced anxiety during the postpartum period. This anxiety included concerns about their baby, fears of being unable to breastfeed, and feelings of inadequacy as a mother (Sulistia, 2024). Many mothers also reported sudden mood swings, frequent crying, feelings of failure in their motherhood, and self-blame. If left unaddressed, these issues can impact women's productivity as mothers and affect milk production, leading to increased panic and stress.

The high rates of postpartum blues in Indonesia can be attributed to several factors, including individual, environmental, and social aspects. Insufficient knowledge about childbirth, the postpartum period, and newborn care can leave mothers unprepared for their new roles. Family support, whether from a husband or the surrounding environment, can also contribute to the experience of postpartum blues. Mothers often feel isolated in caring for their babies and perceive the responsibilities of motherhood as overwhelming, leading to feelings of inadequacy (Marwiyah et al., 2022). Additional contributing factors include cultural beliefs and societal norms that impose pressure or stress on mothers during the postpartum period (Qiftiyah, 2018).

In Indonesia, postpartum blues is still considered a normal condition and does not receive specific treatment, despite the significant impact it can have on the well-being of postpartum mothers and their babies. Untreated postpartum blues can lead to postpartum depression for mothers, while babies may experience growth issues due to a lack of exclusive breastfeeding and maternal care (Qiftiyah, 2018). The ongoing lack of awareness among the Indonesian public regarding the importance of maintaining the mental health of postpartum mothers, coupled with the absence of standardized interventions in midwifery for managing postpartum blues, has motivated researchers to investigate the effectiveness of the Nareswari Method (Breathing, Relaxation, and Coloring) in reducing anxiety levels in postpartum mothers as a preventive measure against postpartum blues. The Nareswari Method combines hypnobreastfeeding techniques with coloring therapy. Hypnobreastfeeding is a relaxation technique aimed at enhancing comfort for postpartum mothers and promoting milk production. Through hypnobreastfeeding, mothers are taught breathing exercises, how to relax their minds, and are given suggestions that breastfeeding can be a comfortable and smooth experience. Coloring, or art therapy, offers benefits such as reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Engaging in coloring allows individuals to express their emotions and can enhance mood and positive feelings, leading to improved emotional well-being for mothers (Hal et al., 2024). Based on this background, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Nareswari Method on anxiety levels in postpartum mothers.



Methods

This study is an analytical observational experiment with a case-control approach, utilizing a pre-test and post-test design with two groups. The independent variables are hypnobreastfeeding and coloring hypnosis, while the dependent variable is the anxiety level of postpartum mothers. The research was conducted in the working area of the Mrican Health Center in Kediri, East Java. The population for this study consists of all postpartum mothers in the Mrican Health Center area, totaling 50 mothers. The sampling technique used is total sampling, resulting in a sample size of 50 respondents, with 25 assigned to the control group and 25 to the treatment group.

The total sample will be divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. The control group consists of postpartum mothers who do not receive therapy with the Nareswari method, totaling 25 respondents, while the experimental group consists of postpartum mothers who receive therapy with the Nareswari method, also totaling 25 respondents. Both groups will undergo pre- and post-tests regarding anxiety levels during the postpartum period.

The experimental group will participate in Nareswari therapy classes, held once a week for one month. In the Nareswari classes, respondents will receive hypnobreastfeeding therapy from a certified hypnotherapist. Respondents will practice breathing exercises, relax their minds, and enter a state of subconscious awareness to receive suggestions that they can be good mothers and that breastfeeding will proceed smoothly. After the hypnobreastfeeding session, respondents will be given time to color, allowing them to express their emotions through this activity. Respondents will also receive relaxation audio for hypnobreastfeeding to listen to daily and coloring materials so they can engage in coloring whenever they wish.

After one month of implementing the Nareswari method, respondents were asked to complete a post-test questionnaire to assess the anxiety levels of mothers following the therapy. Subsequently, the researcher conducted an analysis of the impact of the Nareswari method on anxiety levels in postpartum mothers. Statistical analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics. A paired t-test was employed to analyze the differences in anxiety levels before and after the intervention in the experimental group. Meanwhile, an independent t-test was used to analyze the differences in post-intervention anxiety levels between the experimental and control groups.

Results

After one month of implementing the Nareswari method, data processing was conducted, and the results of this study are presented in the following table:



Table 1. The Distribution of Respondent Characteristics in Treatment and Control Groups

No.	The General Data Respondent	Frequency of Respondent Characteristics				
		Treatment group		Control group		
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Education level	Basic	5	20%	4	16%
		Middle	13	52%	21	84%
		High	7	28%	4	16%
2.	Age	20-30 year	12	48%	16	64%
		30-40 year	13	52%	9	36%
3.	Occupation	housewife	20	80%	18	72%
		Working mom	5	20%	7	27%
4.	Postpartum age	1 month	11	44%	8	32%
		2 months	14	56%	17	68%

The frequency features of respondents according to age, occupation, postpartum age, and education level are displayed in Table 1. The results indicate that the highest education level in both the control and treatment groups is secondary education. In terms of age, both groups fall within the productive age range, which is expected as all respondents are postpartum mothers. Regarding occupation, data reveals that the majority of mothers in both the control and treatment groups are housewife. The data on the current postpartum period experienced by respondents shows that nearly all are in the one- to two-month postpartum range.

Table 2: Anxiety Levels of Postpartum Mother before Nareswari Method

No	Anxiety levels	Treatment Group		Control Group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Mild	3	12%	2	8%
2	Moderate	10	40%	9	36%
3	Severe	12	48%	14	56%

Table 2 presents the anxiety levels of postpartum mothers measured before the implementation of the Nareswari method. The table shows that in both the control group and the treatment group, the majority of respondents (48% and 56%, respectively) experienced severe anxiety, followed by those with moderate anxiety levels before the Nareswari method was applied. This indicates that most postpartum mothers, regardless of two groups, were indeed experiencing postpartum blues prior to receiving the treatment.

Table 3: Anxiety Levels of Postpartum Mother after Nareswari Method

No	Anxiety levels	Treatment Group		Control Group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Mild	14	56%	3	12%
2	Moderate	9	36%	9	36%
3	Severe	0	0%	13	52%

Table 3 shows a significant decrease in anxiety levels following the implementation of the Nareswari method. The proportion of mothers experiencing severe anxiety dropped to none (0%) from the previous 48%. The level of moderate anxiety decreased to 36% from the previous 40%. In contrast, the control group showed little change, with the majority (52%) of

postpartum mothers still experiencing severe anxiety. This indicates that the Nareswari method can significantly reduce anxiety levels in postpartum mothers.

Table 4 Difference in Anxiety Levels between the Treatment and Control Groups

Groups	Tingkat Kecemasan		
	Mean of rank	Sum of rank	p-value
Treatment	9,18	129.2	0,000
Control	20,54	314.0	

Table 4 revealed that there is a difference between the treatment group and the control group's average degree of anxiety. The P value is 0.0000, which is less than the α value of 0.05, indicating a significant difference in anxiety levels between the treatment and control groups.

Additionally, Table 4 shows that the average ranking for the treatment group is 9.18, while the control group has an average ranking of 20.74. The statistical analysis verifies that the anxiety levels of the treatment and control groups differ from one another.

Discussion

The Nareswari method combines hypnobreastfeeding with coloring therapy. Hypnobreastfeeding is a branch of hypnotherapy aimed at enhancing breast milk production (Kharisma Virgian, 2022). Hypnotherapy itself is a combination of communication and psychology used to reprogram an individual's subconscious mind. Through hypnotherapy, we can introduce new suggestions or affirmations aligned with our desired goals (Dağlı & Aktaş Reyhan, 2024). If the suggestion or affirmation successfully enters someone's subconscious mind, then that suggestion will become a reality for that person. The process of implanting suggestions into someone's subconscious mind essentially requires continuous and repetitive time so that the programming of the subconscious mind can proceed smoothly (Trianasari et al., 2024).

In this study, the hypnobirthing technique taught to the respondents began with a process of mental relaxation through breathing exercises, followed by instilling positive suggestions that the mother can breastfeed smoothly and comfortably. It should begin with practicing deep and slow breathing exercises. Deep and slow breathing exercises have been shown to activate endorphin hormones and stimulate the sympathetic nervous system in the body (et al., 2021). When endorphin levels rise, mothers experience feelings of calm and comfort. As respondents feel comfortable, this activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting smooth blood circulation, a slower heart rate, decreased stomach acid, and overall harmonious bodily functions. This contributes to a lighter and fresher feeling in the body. When the body feels at ease and the mind is calm, oxytocin and prolactin hormones—crucial during the postpartum period—are also produced effectively (Asih & Nyimas, 2020).

After being taught the relaxation technique of hypnobreastfeeding, respondents were also provided with hypnobreastfeeding relaxation audio to listen to at home. This relaxation audio contains guidance on how to independently practice hypnobreastfeeding at home and can be used daily. Since the process of embedding suggestions into the subconscious mind must be repeated consistently, respondents listened to the relaxation audio every day for one month (Trianasari et al., 2024). Weekly evaluations were also conducted to assess the implementation of hypnobreastfeeding and its effectiveness.

The results of the study indicate a decrease in anxiety levels among mothers following hypnobreastfeeding and coloring therapy. This aligns with the benefits of hypnotherapy, which serves as a relaxation method and breathing exercise to help manage thoughts. Other studies have also suggested that hypnobreastfeeding positively affects mothers' breast milk production



(Sandriani et al., 2023). The reduction in anxiety among postpartum mothers significantly influences the increase in breast milk production, as the release of milk is stimulated by oxytocin and prolactin hormones, which can be effectively secreted when mothers feel calm (Hanum et al., 2021).

Coloring therapy has long been used to reduce stress and has even been employed as a treatment for various psychological disorders (Riyanti et al., 2023). A comparison of Tables 3 and 4 shows that coloring can lower anxiety levels in postpartum mothers. Several mothers acknowledged that coloring improved their mood, allowing them to release tension and redirect emotions and anxiety through this activity. Some mothers expressed disbelief in their ability to produce beautiful artwork while coloring, which in turn boosted their enthusiasm and self-confidence.

Art has been recognized since ancient times as a means of expressing one's ideas or emotions. Many emotional experiences cannot be articulated or translated into words (Hal et al., 2024). Abstract ideas or feelings can unconsciously be expressed or manifested through art. All respondents were able to complete their coloring projects well within approximately thirty minutes, without prior preparation or instruction on specific coloring techniques. They were able to color effectively and complete their work according to their preferences.

From this study, it can be concluded that during the postpartum period, specific methods or techniques are needed for mothers to reduce anxiety and prevent postpartum blues. Mothers should also pay attention to their mental health, seeking to understand themselves better regarding their desires and feelings. Regular relaxation practices can be a suitable option for mothers to remain "sane" during the postpartum phase. If mothers are happy and can adapt well to the changes in their roles at the beginning of the postpartum period, they will find it easier to care for their babies, and their breast milk production will also be smoother.

Conclusion

The Nareswari method (Breathing, Relaxation, and Coloring) is effective in reducing anxiety levels among postpartum mothers at the Mrican Health Center in Kediri City. There was a significant decrease in anxiety levels in the treatment group after mothers consistently practiced this method for one month. The Nareswari method can be utilized as a preventive measure against postpartum blues and postpartum depression.

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