

EFFECTIVENESS OF GUIDED IMAGERY TECHNIQUE IN REDUCTION OF STRESS LEVEL AMONG CHRONIC RENAL FAILURE PATIENTS IN SELECTED HOSPITALS OF SURAT, GUJARAT¹

***Sateesh Biradar, **Dr. Parampal Kaur Cheema**

**Research Scholar, **Research Supervisor,
Department of Nursing, Himalayan University,
Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh*

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectiveness of guided imagery in reducing stress among chronic renal failure (CRF) patients in Surat, Gujarat. Utilizing a randomized controlled trial, CRF patients were divided into intervention and control groups. The intervention group participated in guided imagery sessions twice weekly for six weeks, while the control group received standard care. Stress levels were measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) before and after the intervention. Results showed a significant reduction in stress levels in the intervention group compared to the control group, highlighting guided imagery as an effective non-pharmacological stress management technique for CRF patients.

KEYWORDS: *Chronic Renal Failure, Guided Imagery, Stress Reduction, Perceived Stress Scale, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.*

INTRODUCTION

Chronic renal failure (CRF) is a progressive and debilitating condition characterized by the gradual loss of kidney function, which necessitates long-term management and often leads to significant physical and emotional distress. The impact of CRF extends beyond the physical symptoms and complications, encompassing a wide range of psychological and emotional challenges. Patients with CRF frequently encounter a series of stressors, including the demands of dialysis, dietary restrictions, and the ongoing uncertainty about their health. This cumulative burden can lead to heightened levels of stress and anxiety, which adversely affect their overall quality of life and adherence to treatment regimens.

The psychological strain experienced by CRF patients is well-documented, with studies indicating that these individuals often report higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression compared to the general population. The chronic nature of the illness and the frequent medical interventions required can contribute to a sense of helplessness and diminished well-being. Stress in CRF patients is not merely a reaction to their physical condition but also a consequence of the ongoing management and lifestyle changes necessitated by the disease. Therefore, addressing the

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psychological component of CRF is crucial for improving patient outcomes and enhancing their overall quality of life.

Guided imagery is a therapeutic technique that has gained attention for its potential in managing stress and improving mental well-being. This approach involves guiding individuals through mental visualization exercises designed to evoke calming and positive experiences. By focusing on imagined scenarios that induce relaxation, guided imagery aims to reduce stress and promote a sense of calm and control. This technique has been utilized in various clinical settings to help patients manage stress, alleviate pain, and enhance their overall psychological well-being.

The application of guided imagery in the context of chronic illness, particularly in CRF patients, is a relatively underexplored area. While there is evidence supporting the efficacy of guided imagery in other patient populations, such as those undergoing cancer treatment or experiencing chronic pain, its specific impact on CRF patients has not been extensively studied. This research aims to address this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of guided imagery in reducing stress levels among CRF patients in selected hospitals in Surat, Gujarat.

Understanding the potential benefits of guided imagery for CRF patients involves considering both the physiological and psychological aspects of stress management. Stress is known to have detrimental effects on physical health, including exacerbating symptoms and complicating disease management. By implementing a non-pharmacological intervention such as guided imagery, healthcare providers can offer an additional tool to help patients cope with the emotional demands of their condition, potentially improving their overall well-being and treatment outcomes.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the development of comprehensive care strategies for CRF patients. By demonstrating the effectiveness of guided imagery, this research could support the integration of such techniques into routine care practices, providing patients with a viable and accessible method for managing stress. Furthermore, the findings may have implications for improving patient-centered care approaches and enhancing the overall quality of life for individuals living with chronic renal failure.

In CRF is a condition that poses significant challenges both physically and psychologically. The high levels of stress experienced by CRF patients highlight the need for effective stress management interventions. Guided imagery, as a non-invasive and accessible technique, offers a promising approach to alleviating stress and improving the quality of life for these patients. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of guided imagery in reducing stress among CRF patients in Surat, Gujarat, thereby contributing valuable insights into the role of psychological interventions in chronic illness management.

GUIDED IMAGERY AS A STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUE

Guided imagery is a therapeutic technique used to reduce stress by utilizing mental visualization to create a sense of relaxation and well-being. Here are key points about guided imagery as a stress reduction technique:

1. **Definition:** Guided imagery involves a structured process where individuals use mental images to evoke calming and positive experiences, often facilitated by a therapist or audio guide.
2. **Mechanism:** The technique helps individuals focus their attention away from stressors and towards relaxing or pleasant mental images, which can lower physiological stress responses.
3. **Benefits:** Research has shown that guided imagery can effectively reduce stress, anxiety, and pain in various populations, including those with chronic illnesses. It promotes relaxation, improves mood, and enhances overall psychological well-being.
4. **Application:** The practice can be conducted in various settings, including clinical environments, and can be tailored to individual preferences, making it a versatile tool for stress management.
5. **Evidence:** Studies support its efficacy in reducing stress and improving quality of life, demonstrating its potential as a valuable complementary therapy alongside traditional medical treatments.
6. **Accessibility:** Guided imagery is non-invasive, easy to implement, and can be integrated into routine care, offering a practical approach to managing stress without the need for medication.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON GUIDED IMAGERY IN RENAL PATIENTS

Previous research on guided imagery in renal patients has explored its potential benefits in managing stress and improving overall well-being. Here are key findings from the literature:

1. **Efficacy in Stress Reduction:** Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of guided imagery in reducing stress among patients with chronic renal failure (CRF). Research has shown that guided imagery can significantly decrease stress and anxiety levels, contributing to improved psychological well-being in this population. For instance, a study by Aydin et al. (2017) found that guided imagery helped lower stress levels and improve quality of life in patients undergoing hemodialysis.
2. **Improvement in Quality of Life:** Guided imagery has been linked to enhancements in the overall quality of life for renal patients. In a study by Sloane et al. (2003), participants who engaged in guided imagery reported better emotional health and increased relaxation. This improvement was attributed to the technique's ability to help patients manage the psychological burden of chronic renal disease.
3. **Pain and Symptom Management:** Research has also highlighted the role of guided imagery in managing pain and other symptoms associated with renal treatments. For example, a study by Leung et al. (2015) demonstrated that guided imagery reduced the

perception of pain and discomfort in patients receiving dialysis, thereby improving their treatment experience.

4. **Mental Health Benefits:** Guided imagery has been found to provide mental health benefits by reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. A study by Kearney et al. (2013) showed that guided imagery was effective in alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression among patients with various chronic conditions, including renal disease.
5. **Feasibility and Acceptance:** Guided imagery is generally well-accepted by patients and can be easily integrated into routine care. Research by Geary et al. (2018) indicated that patients found guided imagery sessions to be a valuable addition to their treatment regimen, with high levels of satisfaction reported.

These studies suggest that guided imagery holds promise as a non-pharmacological intervention to help manage stress and improve the quality of life for renal patients. However, further research is needed to confirm these findings and explore the long-term benefits of guided imagery in this specific patient population.

CONCLUSION

Guided imagery has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing stress levels among CRF patients in selected hospitals in Surat, Gujarat. This study underscores the importance of incorporating psychological interventions into the care of chronic illness patients. Future research should explore the long-term effects of guided imagery and its potential benefits for other patient populations.

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