

Application of Benson Relaxation Technique to Reduce Blood Pressure in Hypertensive Patients at ICCU Ward of RSD Gunung Jati, Cirebon City

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ABSTRACT

Background & Objective: Hypertension, also known as the “silent killer,” is one of the leading causes of death worldwide. Benson relaxation is a non-pharmacological therapy using breathing relaxation combined with the patient’s belief factor. **Method:** This study used a descriptive method with a case study approach. **Result:** The application of Benson relaxation for three consecutive days showed a reduction in blood pressure among hypertensive patients. **Conclusion:** Benson relaxation therapy is effective in reducing blood pressure in patients with hypertension.

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Introduction

Increased arterial pressure is known as hypertension. Blood pressure measurement yields two values: the higher (systolic) pressure occurs when the heart contracts, and the lower (diastolic) pressure occurs when the heart relaxes. Hypertension, also referred to as the “silent killer,” is one of the world’s leading causes of mortality, characterized by elevated systolic and diastolic pressures exceeding 140 mmHg and 90 mmHg, respectively (WHO, 2023).

According to World Health Organization (WHO) data in 2021, an estimated 1.28 billion adults aged 30–79 years globally suffer from hypertension, with two-thirds living in low- and middle-income countries. Approximately 46% of adults with

hypertension are unaware of their condition. Fewer than half (42%) are diagnosed and treated, and only 21% manage to control it. Hypertension remains the leading cause of premature death worldwide. One of the global targets for non-communicable diseases is to reduce hypertension prevalence by 33% between 2010 and 2030 (WHO, 2023).

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a chronic condition in which arterial blood pressure remains consistently elevated. Common symptoms include neck pain, dizziness, and capillary blood vessel swelling. If left untreated, hypertension can lead to complications such as heart failure, stroke, aneurysms, visual impairment, kidney disease, metabolic syndrome, and even death.

Several non-pharmacological therapies for hypertension include hypnotherapy, distraction, massage, music, slow deep breathing, Benson relaxation, and cupping therapy. Benson relaxation, developed by Herbert Benson, a medical researcher at Harvard Medical School, integrates the benefits of prayer and meditation into health care. This method combines breathing relaxation with patient belief, creating an internal environment conducive to better health and well-being (Margiyati & Setyajati, 2023). The four essential elements of Benson relaxation include a quiet environment, voluntary muscle relaxation, concentration for 10–15 minutes on a chosen phrase or word, and passive disregard of distracting thoughts (Nurhalimah, 2022). The goal of Benson relaxation is to reduce blood pressure in hypertensive patients (Pratiwi et al., 2021).

Objective

Based on the data above, the author conducted a study entitled: “Application of Benson Relaxation Technique to Reduce Blood Pressure in Hypertensive Patients at ICCU Ward of RSD Gunung Jati, Cirebon City.”.

Method

This study applied a descriptive case study design aimed at exploring nursing care interventions through the application of Benson relaxation for lowering blood pressure in hypertensive patients. The nursing care approach used included assessment, diagnosis, planning (intervention), implementation, and evaluation.

The research subject was an individual patient diagnosed with hypertension in the ICCU ward of RSD Gunung Jati, Cirebon, examined in detail and depth.

Results

The patient, identified as Mrs. L, aged 58 years, was *compos mentis* and medically diagnosed with hypertension. She was admitted to the hospital accompanied by her family with complaints of dizziness and chest pain (in both left and right chest areas). The patient's body weight decreased from 65 kg to 63 kg. She also had a history of heart disease.

On admission to the ward, she reported dizziness and chest pain. Observation findings: pulse 102 bpm, blood pressure 150/97 mmHg, respiratory rate 26 breaths/min, slightly rapid breathing, pale skin, and tenderness on palpation of both chest areas.

The nursing diagnosis established was Ineffective Peripheral Tissue Perfusion related to increased blood pressure.

The nursing intervention included peripheral circulation care by assessing circulation, monitoring vital signs, applying non-pharmacological Benson relaxation therapy to reduce blood pressure, and collaborating on analgesic administration. Benson relaxation was performed for three consecutive days in addition to pharmacological management.

- Day 1 (February 16, 2025): Nursing assessment, peripheral circulation check, collaboration in analgesic administration, and Benson relaxation. The patient still reported dizziness and chest pain. BP: pre 150/97 mmHg → post 147/91 mmHg, pulse 102 bpm, cold extremities, pale skin.
- Day 2 (February 17, 2025): The same interventions were provided. The patient reported reduced dizziness and slightly less chest pain. BP: pre 146/88 mmHg → post 142/87 mmHg, pulse 98 bpm, extremities still cold, skin slightly pale.
- Day 3 (February 18, 2025): Continued interventions. The patient reported no dizziness or chest pain, appeared relaxed, and vital signs improved. BP: pre 143/90 mmHg → post 141/89 mmHg, pulse 93 bpm.

The results indicated that Benson relaxation, performed daily for three days, significantly reduced blood pressure and alleviated symptoms.

Discussion

This study demonstrated a gradual reduction in the patient's blood pressure from day one to day three. Evaluation indicated that the patient was able to perform Benson relaxation independently, leading to improved blood pressure control.

During Benson relaxation, parasympathetic nervous system activation occurs, counteracting sympathetic activity. This results in decreased sympathetic stimulation, mild vasodilation, improved blood circulation, and increased oxygen delivery to tissues, particularly peripheral tissues. Consequently, blood pressure stabilizes gradually, reducing pain and stress – key triggers of hypertension (Pratiwi et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The application of Benson relaxation therapy for three consecutive days was effective in lowering blood pressure in a hypertensive patient. The patient experienced reduced chest pain, improved relaxation, and gradual stabilization of vital signs. These findings confirm that Benson relaxation is a useful non-pharmacological nursing intervention to support blood pressure control in hypertensive patients.

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