

Effectiveness of Relaxation Therapy on Stress among Caregivers of Mentally Challenged Children in Selected Mentally Challenged Schools

Feby.G¹, Sharmila Jansi Rani.S.S²

¹Vice Principal, St. Xavier's Catholic College of Nursing, Chunkankadai, ²Vice Principal, Christian College of Nursing, Neyyoor, Affiliated to The Tamilnadu Dr.MGR Medical University, Chennai

Abstract

Stress is an unpleasant emotion in the competitive environment. The quality of work depends on the conducive environment, workload, adequate communication, remuneration and psychological wellbeing. This study had assessed the Effectiveness of Relaxation therapy on stress among 75 caregivers of mentally challenged children. Quantitative research approach with pre experimental one group pre test post test design was adopted. Data collected through structured interview schedule using stress Assessment Scale. The findings revealed that there was a significant reduction of stress ($t=26.17$, $p<0.001$) and showed that relaxation therapy is effective in reducing stress.

Keywords: Caregivers, Mentally Challenged Children, Relaxation therapy, Stress.

Introduction

Care giving is a challenging complex health care activity and it is becoming as a major part of health care. Mentally challenged children have lack of intellectual potential, lag in mental capacities than other peers, slow to learn hence it is mandatory to have a caregiver throughout their lifetime.

The National Sample Survey Organisation 2017 stated the prevalence of Intellectual disability as 1-4% i.e. about 20 people per 1000 population. In India 84% of the caregivers are women and more than 96% of them are belonging to working age². Caregivers help the mentally challenged children with everyday activities such as eating, dressing, bathing/toileting activities, during therapies and while taking medications.

Caregivers invest their time, energy with highest degree of burden. The common difficulties they face are impaired memory, less attention, problem with making decision, solving problems, difficulties with finding words and weak civic behaviour. Caring a mentally challenged child is a physically and mentally tasking job.

Stress is a universal human experience with both pleasant and unpleasant happenings in the school environment. Caregivers working with mentally challenged children face various challenges in their personal and Occupational activities. The caregivers has to take care of all the physical needs of the mentally challenged children, keenly watch all the activities and keep an eye throughout the school environment because any child can do any kind of misbehaviour. This creates stressful situations for them.

A cross sectional study conducted on stress among the caregivers of mentally challenged children visiting a Rehabilitation centres in Chennai among 101 participants.64.3% had severe level of stress, 21.7% had a moderate level of stress and 13.8% had mild stress³.

Corresponding Author:

G.Feby

Vice Principal, St. Xavier's Catholic College of Nursing, Chunkankadai* 9488338020

Email id: febyjeba@gmail.com

A study was conducted on effectiveness of stress management training on stress among 50 mothers of mentally challenged children through purposive sampling technique. Quasi experimental Non- randomised control design was adopted and 10 sessions of 60 minutes stress management training was given to the mothers after pre test. The findings revealed that there was significant difference in the pre test mean score of 25.29 and post test mean score of 14.38 with the mean difference 10.91. It was highly significant at $p < 0.001$ level and concluded that stress management is effective in improving the mental health, stress and social interaction among mothers of mentally challenged children⁶.

Considering of all these stressful situations by a caregiver during the school working hours, the investigator had an impulse to assess the effectiveness of relaxation therapy among care givers of mentally challenged children to reduce stress by relaxing the whole body and mind.

Statement of the Problem

A Pre experimental Study to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Relaxation Therapy on Stress among Caregivers of Mentally Challenged Children in Selected Mentally Challenged Schools at Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu.

Objectives

1. To assess the pre test and post test score on stress among caregivers of mentally challenged children.
2. To determine the effectiveness of relaxation therapy on stress among caregivers of mentally challenged children.
3. To find out the association between selected background variables among caregivers of mentally challenged children with their pre test score on stress.

Hypothesis

H_{01} There is no significant difference between pre test and post test score on stress among caregivers of mentally challenged children.

Materials and Methods

Conceptual framework of this study was based on Betty Newman's system model. Quantitative research approach and pre experimental one group pre test post test design was adopted. After obtaining formal permission from the Differently Abled Welfare Officer and from the Principals of Mentally Challenged Schools, the study was conducted in 17 mentally Challenged schools. The accessible population was all the caregivers (76 caregivers) of mentally challenged children in the selected disabled schools. Caregivers were screened with the stress screening tool through structured interview schedule and the care givers belonged to mild, moderate and severe stress were selected for the study using purposive sampling technique. So one drop out (1% attrition) during the data collection process and the sample size of the study was 75. Background variables such as Personal, Occupational and Clinical variables were collected through structured interview schedule. Pre test was done using Stress Assessment Scale through structured interview schedule. 30 minutes was spend to fill the tool. Followed by that Relaxation therapy was taught in five sessions with one hour duration for each session and it was performed for 30 minutes through Breathing techniques for 10 minutes, muscle relaxation through Progressive Muscle Relaxation for 10 minutes and mental relaxation through mindfulness meditation for 10 minutes and made all the teachers to perform for 15 working days in front of the investigator. Finally an information booklet was issued to all the caregivers of mentally Challenged children.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Variables

The frequency and percentage distribution of personal variables among caregivers of mentally challenged children, majority 33 (44%) were aged between 41 – 50 years, 51 (68%) were females, 26 (35%) were literate, 56 (75%) were Christians, 44 (59%) were married and 68 (57%) belonged to Nuclear family.

The frequency and percentage distribution of Occupational variables among caregivers of mentally challenged children, majority 31(41%) had 6 – 10 years

of experience and 37 (50%) earning about Rs.3000 – Rs. 5000 as monthly salary respectively and 32 (43%) had worked 4 – 8 hours per day and 42(56%) cared 5 – 10 children.

The frequency and percentage distribution of Clinical variables among caregivers of mentally challenged children, majority 21 (28%) do not have any medical history and 18 (24%) and family medical history of Diabetes mellitus. In reproductive health history

for females 15 (20%) had premenstrual symptoms. In males, 3 (4%) had the habit of Drinking alcohol and 2(3%) were tobacco chewers.

The first objective of the study is to assess the pre test and post test score on stress among Caregivers of mentally challenged children.

Assessment of Stress among Caregivers of Mentally Challenged Children in Selected Mentally Challenged Schools.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and percentage on overall pre test and post test score on stress among caregivers of mentally disabled children in selected mentally disabled schools.

N = 75

Stress	Mean	SD	Percentage
Pre test	198.56	40.16	50
Post test	103.18	36.28	26

The frequency and percentage distribution of the overall pre test score on stress among caregivers of mentally challenged children, 57% had mild stress, 43% had moderate stress and none of them had severe stress and no stress.

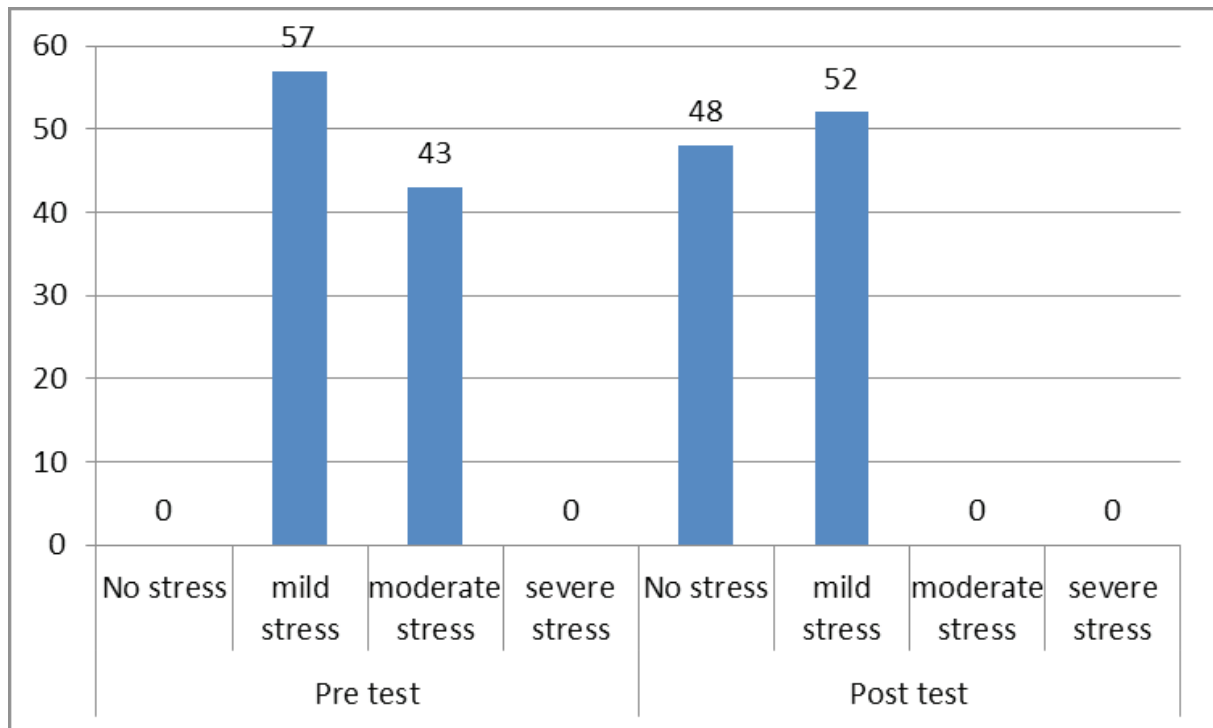


Figure 1: Bar diagram showing the pre test and post test score on stress among caregivers of mentally disabled children in selected mentally disabled schools.

The frequency and percentage distribution of the aspects of stress among caregivers of mentally challenged children in the pre test and post test, majority 40(53%) had mild Physical stress in both, 41 (55%) had mild Mental stress and 43 (57%) had no Mental stress, 48(64%) had mild Emotional stress and 38(51%) had no Emotional stress,49 (65%) had mild Social stress and 41 (55%) had mild Social stress, 39 (52%) had mild Cognitive stress and 45(60%) had mild Cognitive stress, 47(63%) had mild Behavioural stress and 38 (51%) had mild Behavioural stress,48(64%) had mild Environmental stress and 39(52%) had mild Environmental stress, 42(56%) had mild Occupational stress and 38(51%) had no Occupational stress respectively.

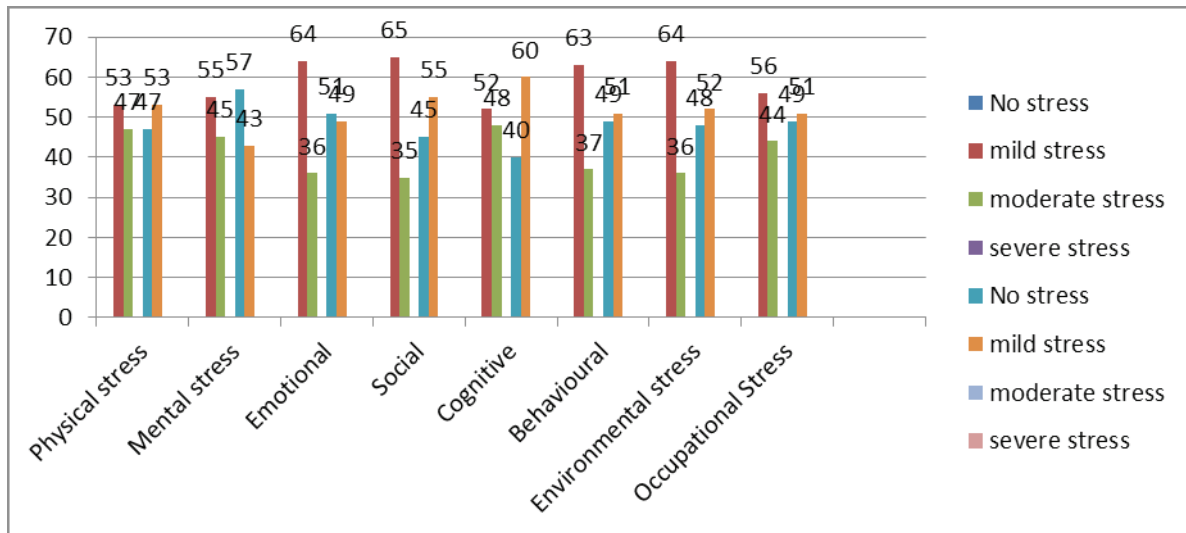


Figure 2: Grouped bar chart showing the comparison of the aspects of stress in pre test with the post test among caregivers of mentally disabled children in selected mentally disabled schools.

The second objective is to determine the effectiveness of relaxation therapy on stress among teachers of mentally challenged children. Effectiveness of Relaxation therapy on stress among caregivers of mentally challenged children.

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation, Mean difference and ‘t’ value of pre test of post test score on aspects of stress

N=75

Sl. No	Aspects of stress	Mean	SD	Mean difference	‘t’ value	Level of Significance
1	Physical stress					
	Pre test	25.33	8.92	13.00	12.68	.001
	Post test	12.33	4.36			
2	Mental Stress					
	Pre test	25.20	9.08	14.07	13.93	.001
	Post test	11.13	4.63			

3	Emotional stress					
	Pre test	22.40	8.18	10.60	9.68	.001
	Post test	11.80	4.29			
4	Social stress					
	Pre test	21.60	7.83	9.50	9.13	.001
	Post test	12.10	4.66			
5	Cognitive stress					
	Pre test	25.10	8.84	11.30	12.06	.001
	Post test	13.80	4.94			
6	Behavioural stress					
	Pre test	22.90	8.26	10.84	11.63	.001
	Post test	12.06	4.28			
7	Environmental stress					
	Pre test	25.70	8.78	13.42	12.73	.001
	Post test	12.28	4.64			
8	Occupational stress					
	Pre test	23.10	8.16	10.60	9.86	.001
	Post test	12.50	4.78			

Table 3: Mean, Standard deviation, Mean Percentage, Mean difference, paired 't' value of Pre test and Post

test stress score

N = 75

Stress	Mean	SD	Mean %	Mean Difference	Paired 't' test	Level of Significance
Pretest	198.56	40.16	49.64	95.38	26.17	0.001
Post test	103.18	36.28	25.79			

Note: No of observations = 80; maximum possible score = 400

There is lower mean overall stress score in the post test (103.18) with SD±36.28 than the pre test (198.56) with SD± 40.16, 't' = 26.17 at 0.1% level. The mean difference was high and statistically significant at 0.1% level.

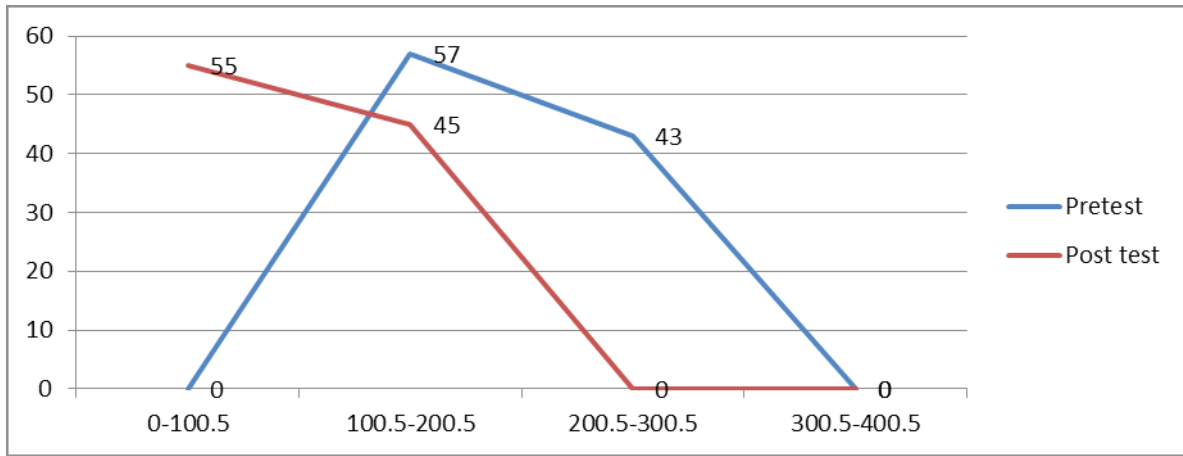


Figure 3: O-give curve representing the Comparison of the stress score in Pre test with the Post test among Caregivers of Mentally Challenged Children.

The post test O-give lies to the right of the pre test score over the entire range showing that the post test scores were consistently higher than the pre test scores. The change in Stress is evident by the distance separated by the two curves at various levels among care givers of mentally disabled children in selected mentally challenged schools.

Similar results were reported in a pre experimental study conducted on effectiveness of pranayama on stress among 40 mothers of mentally challenged children at selected special schools⁵. There was highly significant difference in the pretest 24.55 and post test 15.98. The paired't' value was 10.20 which was statistically

significant. Hence the Null hypothesis H_{01} There is no significant difference between pre test and post test score on stress among caregivers of mentally Challenged children is rejected.

The third objective is to find out the association between selected background variables among teachers of mentally challenged children with their pre test score on stress.

Association between Selected background variables among Teachers of Mentally Challenged Children with their pre test Stress score

The findings revealed that there was a highly significant association between pre test stress score and age ($c^2 = 8.21$, $df = 3$ significant at 0.043 level of significance, Experience ($c^2 = 8.61$ $df = 3$) significant at 0.04 level of significance, Hours worked per day ($c^2 = 13.04$, $df = 2$) significant at 0.004 level of significance, Number of children cared ($c^2 = 9.39$, $df = 2$) at 0.013 level of significance, Medical history ($c^2 = 23.08$, $df = 6$) significant at 0.001 level of significance,.

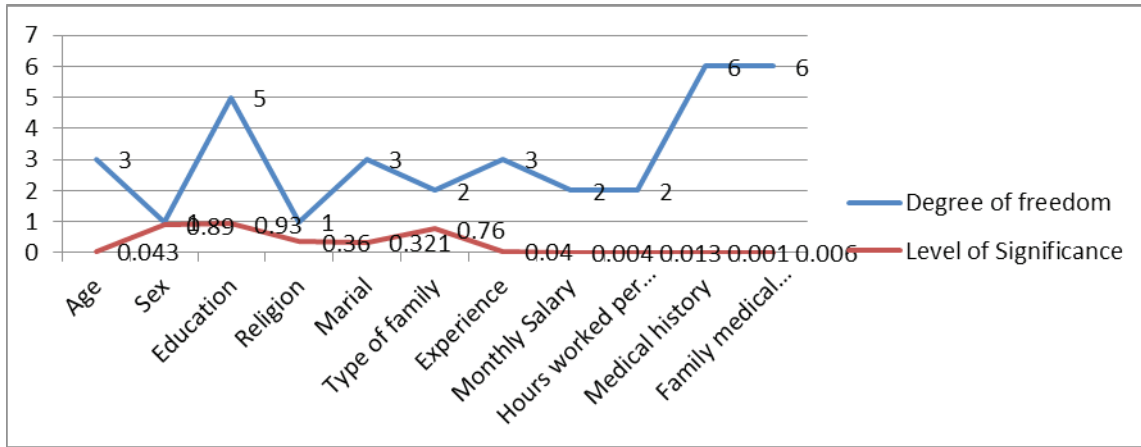


Figure 4: Line Diagram showing Association between Selected background variables among Caregivers of mentally challenged children with their Pre test Stress score.

This finding was congruent with the results of the study conducted on caregivers stress concluded that 89% of the caregivers had moderate stress and there was a significant association with demographic variables such as gender, education, occupation, income and relationship with the child¹.

Conclusion

Relaxation therapy is an effective non-invasive, non-pharmacological, complementary and alternative therapy to reduce the level of stress among caregivers of mentally challenged children. Hence School Health Nurses can adopt this therapy to relax the body, mind and soul of the caregivers and enhance their quality of life.

Acknowledgement: I wish to thank God almighty for supporting me from the initial step of research till the dissemination of its findings as a original manuscript. I convey my heartfelt gratitude to Dr.A.Reena Evency, Principal, St.Xavier’s Catholic College of Nursing, Chunkankadai for her research guidance to complete this study successfully.

Conflict of Interest: Nil

Source of Funding: Self

Ethical Clearance: Taken from District Differently abled Welfare Committee.

References

1. Abirami.P. (2016). Assessment of the burden on caregivers of children with selected [internet]. *ICCR-INR*; **1(1)**; 17-23. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cegh.2020.04.008>.
2. Rick.G. Embracing the critical role of caregivers around the world White paper Action Plan. [internet]. U.S, Canada: International Alliance of Carer Organization; *Merek KGaA Embracing carers*. 2017. 1-27. Available from: <https://www.embracingcarers.com › infographics; white paper pdf.US/NPR/0917/0372>.
3. Ramachandran. A, Vyas.N , Pothiyil D.A. Stress among the caregivers of mentally disabled children visiting a rehabilitation centre in Chennai-A cross sectional study; [internet].Netherland: *Elsevier; Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health*. 2020. **8(4)**.Dec.2020.1155-1157.Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cegh.2020.04.008>.
4. Mohanasundari .S.K. Enlightenment for parents and caregiver to raise the child with cerebral palsy.

- [internet]. U.S:McMed International; *American Journal of Advances in Nursing Research*, 2017. **4(1)**, 30-33. Available from: <http://www.scinapse.in>.
5. Saishree.M. Effectiveness of pranayama on stress among 40 mothers of mentally challenged children at selected special schools. [internet] .2015. 50-70. Available from: <https://repository.tnmgrmu.ac.in>3005275> saisreem.
 6. Vijayasamundeeswari.P, Sathiya.K, Poongodi.R. A Study to Assess the Effectiveness of Stress Management Training on Stress among Mothers of Mentally Disabled Children. [internet]. Noida,Uttar Pradesh: *Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, 2020.**11(4)**, 239-244. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.37506/ijphrd.v11i4.4573>.