

A Comparative Study of Breathing Exercises versus Relaxation Exercises in Individuals with Anxiety Symptoms

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Anxiety disorders affect more than 264 million people globally and significantly impair daily functioning and quality of life. Non-pharmacological physiotherapy interventions such as breathing exercises and relaxation techniques have shown promising results in managing anxiety. Breathing exercises influence the autonomic nervous system by reducing sympathetic activity, while relaxation techniques help in reducing muscle tension and mental stress.

Aim: To compare the effectiveness of breathing exercises and relaxation exercises in reducing anxiety symptoms in individuals with moderate anxiety.

Materials and Methods: A comparative study was conducted on 42 participants aged 18-45 years with mild to moderate anxiety symptoms. Participants were selected using convenience sampling and divided into two groups: Group A (n=21): Breathing exercises (diaphragmatic breathing, pursed-lip breathing), Group B (n=21): Relaxation exercises (progressive muscle relaxation, visualisation).

The intervention was carried out for approximately 6-8 weeks. Outcome measures included: Generalised Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7), WHO Quality of Life (WHO-QOL) scale. Pre- and post-intervention assessments were recorded and analysed.

Results: The study demonstrated a significant reduction in anxiety levels in both groups after intervention. But groups with breathing exercises were more effective in decreasing anxiety symptoms. Pre-intervention anxiety scores were higher and showed a noticeable decrease post-intervention. Additionally, quality of life scores improved significantly following treatment.

Conclusion: Both breathing exercises and relaxation exercises are effective non-pharmacological interventions for reducing anxiety symptoms and improving quality of life. These techniques can be safely incorporated into physiotherapy management for individuals with anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Breathing exercises, Non-pharmacological treatment, Physiotherapy, Quality of life, Relaxation techniques.

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