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The use of five-finger hypnosis for soothing postpartum anxiety

Dina Nadifah , Sambodo Sriadi Pinilih, Muhammad Khoirul Amin

Authors information
Department of Nursing, Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang, Indonesia

Contactable email: wahabfajar2009@gmail.com / Article DOI: *On process*

Abstract
The postpartum period is a time of recovery that begins at the end of labor and lasts until the uterus returns to its pre-pregnancy state. This phase of transition can lead some mothers to experience a life crisis due to various physical and psychological changes, one of which is anxiety. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of five-finger hypnosis in reducing spontaneous postpartum anxiety. This scientific work employs a case study method, with data collection conducted at Muntilan Regional General Hospital from January 15 to January 31, 2024. Nursing interventions were provided to three postpartum clients experiencing anxiety. The results indicated varying responses among the three clients before and after the implementation of the five-finger hypnosis technique. Overall, the findings demonstrated a significant effect of five-finger hypnosis on reducing spontaneous postpartum anxiety.

Keywords: Postpartum period; anxiety; hospital care; five-finger hypnosis; mental health nursing

Introduction
The postpartum period, also known as the puerperium, is the time following the birth of the placenta and lasts until the body returns to its pre-pregnancy state, typically occurring over six weeks or approximately 40 days (Romano, Cacciatore, Giordano, & La Rosa, 2010). The postpartum period involves several adaptations, including psychological, physiological, and social changes. The postpartum period, often referred to as the puerperium, is a critical phase that begins immediately after the birth of the placenta and extends until a woman's body returns to its pre-pregnancy state (Chauhan & Tadi, 2022). This period typically lasts around six weeks, or approximately 40 days, during which various physiological changes occur. These changes are essential for the recovery of the mother's body, including the shrinking of the uterus, the cessation of lochia (postpartum bleeding), and hormonal adjustments as the body transitions from pregnancy to its non-pregnant state (Lopez-Gonzalez & Kopparapu, 2022). The physical recovery process is crucial not only for the mother's health but also for her ability to care for the newborn. Understanding the complexities of this period can help healthcare providers support new mothers effectively and address any complications that may arise during this time (Kumarasinghe, Herath, Hills, & Ahuja, 2024). In addition to the physical changes, the postpartum period is marked by significant psychological adaptations. Many mothers experience a range of emotions, from joy and elation to anxiety and sadness (Rai, Pathak, & Sharma, 2015). The sudden shift in responsibilities and the demands of caring for a newborn can be overwhelming, leading some women to experience postpartum anxiety or depression (Asadi, Noroozi, & Alavi, 2020). These psychological adaptations are influenced by various factors, including previous mental health history, support systems, and the overall experience of childbirth. It is essential for healthcare providers to recognize these emotional challenges and offer appropriate support and interventions to help mothers navigate this transitional phase (Garapati et al., 2023). With fostering an environment of understanding and support, healthcare professionals can play a vital role in promoting mental well-being during the postpartum period.

Social changes also play a significant role in the postpartum experience. The arrival of a new baby often alters family dynamics and relationships, requiring adjustments in roles and responsibilities among family members. New mothers may find themselves relying heavily on their partners, family, and friends for emotional and practical support (White et al., 2023). This reliance can be both a source of strength and a potential stressor, particularly if the necessary support is lacking. Moreover, societal expectations regarding motherhood can create additional pressure, leading to feelings of inadequacy or anxiety (Negron, Martin, Almog, Balbierz, & Howell, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial for new mothers to have access to community resources and support networks that can help them cope with the challenges of motherhood. With addressing these psychological and social dimensions, healthcare providers can contribute to a more holistic approach to postpartum care, ultimately enhancing the well-being of both mothers and their newborns. However, not all postpartum mothers navigate this transition smoothly, which can lead to psychological disorders, one of the most common being anxiety. The incidence of postpartum maternal anxiety remains high in various countries,

with reported levels of 18.2% in Portugal, 29% in Bangladesh, 54% in Hong Kong, and 70% in Pakistan (Agustin & Septiyana, 2018). In Indonesia, the prevalence of anxiety among mothers is approximately 28.7%. Among primiparous mothers, 83.4% experience severe anxiety, while 16.6% report moderate anxiety. To address anxiety, therapies are generally categorized into pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches. One effective non-pharmacological therapy for reducing anxiety is five-finger hypnosis. This technique involves diverting a person's thoughts by touching the fingers of one hand while visualizing pleasant or enjoyable experiences (Halim & Khayati, 2020).

Five-finger hypnosis is an innovative and non-pharmacological technique designed to help alleviate postpartum anxiety by promoting relaxation and mental distraction. This method involves a simple yet effective process where the individual focuses on each finger while engaging in deep breathing and visualization techniques. As the mother touches each finger, she is encouraged to associate it with positive thoughts or calming imagery, which can help redirect her mind away from anxious feelings (Norkhalifah & Mubin, 2022). With fostering a sense of control and relaxation, five-finger hypnosis can empower new mothers to manage their anxiety more effectively, making it a valuable tool during the challenging postpartum period. The effectiveness of five-finger hypnosis lies in its accessibility and ease of use. New mothers can practice this technique anywhere, whether at home or in a quiet space, making it a practical option for those experiencing anxiety (Handayani & Mawardika, 2023). Additionally, this method can be integrated into daily routines, allowing mothers to utilize it whenever they feel overwhelmed. Research has shown that such mindfulness-based techniques can significantly reduce anxiety levels and improve overall mental well-being (Fumero, Peñate, Oyanadel, & Porter, 2020; Hofmann & Gómez, 2017). With providing a structured yet flexible approach to managing postpartum anxiety, five-finger hypnosis not only helps mothers cope with immediate feelings of distress but also fosters long-term resilience as they navigate the complexities of motherhood. Therefore, the study aimed to evaluate the benefits of five-finger hypnosis in patient with post-partum depression.

Case Description

At this stage, the author conducted an assessment from January 15 to January 31, 2024, gathering data from three patients as follows: *Patient I*, Mrs. R, a 28-year-old female residing in Muntilan, was admitted to the Gladiolus ward with a medical diagnosis of P1G1A0 PPS and a history of H=40+5 mg. As a first-time mother, she expressed anxiety about her breast milk not coming in and complained of full and uncomfortable breasts. She reported no drug allergies and expressed a strong desire to care for herself and her baby, indicating she was in the letting-go phase. The patient received oral pharmacological therapy, including mefenamic acid (3x500 mg) for pain relief, cefadroxil (2x500 mg) as an antibiotic, and tranexamic acid (3x500 mg) to manage postpartum bleeding. Subjective data revealed that she was worried about her breast milk supply and whether her baby would be able to latch and feed. Objective data indicated that she appeared restless, confused, and less concentrated, with no visible breast milk. The nursing diagnosis was anxiety related to inadequate breast milk supply, evidenced by her worries about milk production (D.0080).

Patient II, Mrs. E, a 23-year-old female from Sawangan, was also in the Gladiolus ward with a medical diagnosis of P2A0 PPS. As this was her second childbirth, she expressed concern about not being able to care for her baby. She frequently asked nurses about her baby's condition, reflecting her anxiety about being separated from her newborn. The patient was in the taking-hold phase. Her pharmacological therapy included mefenamic acid (3x500 mg) for mild pain relief, cefadroxil (2x500 mg) as an antibiotic, and Matergin (IV) to treat postpartum bleeding. Subjective data indicated her worries about her baby's well-being due to their separation. Objective observations showed that she appeared restless and gloomy, indicating a lack of connection with her baby. The nursing diagnosis was anxiety related to the lack of joint care, evidenced by her concerns for her baby (D.0080).

Patient III, Mrs. N, a 25-year-old female from Muntilan, was admitted to the Gladiolus ward with a medical diagnosis of P1A0 PPS and a history of H=40+2 mg. As a first-time mother, she expressed anxiety about her breast milk not coming in and reported no drug allergies. She voiced her desire to care for herself and her baby, indicating she was in the letting-go phase. She received oral pharmacological therapy, including mefenamic acid (3x500 mg) for pain relief, cefadroxil (2x500 mg) as an antibiotic, and tranexamic acid (3x500 mg) to manage postpartum bleeding. Subjective data showed that she was worried about her breast milk supply and whether her baby would be able to latch. Objective observations indicated that she appeared restless, confused, and less focused, with no visible breast milk. The nursing diagnosis was anxiety related to inadequate breast milk supply, evidenced by her worries about milk production (D.0080). All three patients received five-finger hypnosis for six days to help reduce their anxiety. An evaluation of the intervention revealed that, subjectively, all patients reported a reduction in anxiety levels. Objectively, they appeared calmer, and the assessment indicated that their anxiety was partially resolved. The intervention for all three patients was continued with relaxation training to further support their mental well-being.

Discussion

This research investigated the influence of the five-finger hypnosis distraction technique on postpartum anxiety. Conducted at Muntilan Regional General Hospital from January 15 to January 31, 2024, the study involved three postpartum patients experiencing anxiety who volunteered as respondents for three weeks. The study revealed distinct differences in anxiety levels before and after the administration of the five-finger hypnosis distraction technique.

Results indicated a notable influence of the technique on postpartum anxiety, with an average decrease of 4-5 points in anxiety scores. The arrival of a newborn brings immense joy, but for some mothers, it can also usher in a wave of anxiety. Postpartum anxiety, a common yet often overlooked condition, can cast a shadow over this special time. Fortunately, five-finger hypnosis offers a gentle and effective approach to reclaiming peace of mind. This simple, self-administered technique empowers mothers to manage their anxiety and fully embrace motherhood. One of the most significant benefits of five-finger hypnosis is its accessibility (Rhodes, Biggs, Griggs, Roberts, & Elkins, 2022). Unlike traditional therapy, which often requires scheduling appointments and childcare arrangements, this technique can be practiced anytime, anywhere. Mothers can utilize it during those quiet moments when anxiety surfaces, such as during nighttime feedings or while the baby naps. This readily available tool provides a sense of control and autonomy, empowering mothers to manage their anxiety independently. Furthermore, five finger hypnosis promotes deep relaxation, a welcome respite for new mothers facing sleep deprivation and hormonal fluctuations (Lang et al., 2008). With focusing on each finger and associating it with a calming image or affirmation, the technique guides the mind away from anxious thoughts and towards a state of tranquillity. This relaxation response not only alleviates anxiety but also improves sleep quality, boosts energy levels, and enhances overall well-being (Besedovsky et al., 2022).

Beyond its immediate calming effects, five finger hypnosis equips mothers with long-term coping mechanisms. With practicing the technique regularly, mothers develop a heightened sense of self-awareness and learn to identify their anxiety triggers (Johnson, Roberts, & Elkins, 2019). This awareness, coupled with the learned ability to shift into a relaxed state, empowers mothers to navigate stressful situations with greater ease and resilience. Consequently, five finger hypnosis extends its benefits far beyond the postpartum period, providing mothers with valuable tools to manage stress and anxiety in various aspects of their lives (Kasos et al., 2018). While five finger hypnosis presents itself as a readily accessible, self-administered technique, the role of healthcare professionals remains paramount in ensuring its safe and effective application, particularly for vulnerable populations like postpartum mothers. Their expertise goes beyond mere instruction, encompassing a multifaceted approach that empowers mothers to harness the full potential of this powerful tool (Yeh, Schnur, & Montgomery, 2014). Firstly, healthcare professionals act as discerning gatekeepers, meticulously assessing the suitability of five finger hypnosis for each individual. Postpartum anxiety exists on a spectrum, and while this technique proves beneficial for many, certain mothers may require alternative or complementary therapies. A thorough evaluation, considering medical history, anxiety severity, and individual needs, ensures the chosen approach aligns perfectly with the mother's unique circumstances.

Once deemed appropriate, healthcare professionals transform into patient educators, demystifying the mechanics of five finger hypnosis. They provide clear, concise explanations, dispelling any misconceptions and fostering a sense of understanding and confidence. This education extends beyond the technique itself, encompassing the science behind its efficacy, empowering mothers to engage with the process fully. Moreover, healthcare professionals serve as invaluable guides, tailoring the technique to individual needs and preferences (Elkins, 2022). They collaborate with mothers to personalize the experience, selecting calming imagery, affirmations, or sensory cues that resonate deeply. This personalized approach enhances engagement and maximizes the effectiveness of each session. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, healthcare professionals provide unwavering support throughout the journey. They offer encouragement, address concerns, and celebrate milestones, fostering a therapeutic alliance that empowers mothers to persevere. This ongoing support proves crucial in navigating challenges, reinforcing learned skills, and ensuring long-term success in managing postpartum anxiety (Garapati et al., 2023). In essence, healthcare professionals, through their multifaceted roles, transform five finger hypnosis from a simple technique into a personalized, empowering journey towards postpartum well-being.

Conclusion

Five-finger hypnosis demonstrates promise as a complementary intervention for reducing postpartum anxiety. The practice empowers new mothers to utilize a simple, self-administered technique to manage their anxiety, fostering a sense of control and relaxation during a challenging time. With focusing on positive imagery and associating it with physical anchors (such as finger movements), the technique provides a practical and accessible tool for stress relief, which can be integrated into daily life. However, while preliminary findings are encouraging, further research is recommended. Future studies should aim for larger, more diverse participant groups to enhance generalizability and should include long-term follow-up assessments to gauge sustained effects. Randomized controlled trials comparing five-finger hypnosis with other established therapies would also be beneficial in determining its relative efficacy. Additionally, investigating the neurobiological mechanisms underlying the technique’s impact on anxiety could offer deeper insights and refine its application. As more evidence accumulates, five-finger hypnosis has the potential to become a widely adopted method in postpartum care for reducing anxiety and improving maternal well-being.

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