

## EFFECTIVENESS OF FACIAL ACCUPRESSURE THERAPY IN THE REDUCTION OF ANXIETY IN POSTPARTUM WOMEN

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### Abstrak

*The puerperium is the period of the return of the reproductive organs in their pre-pregnancy state. In most postpartum mothers experience anxiety, this condition if not immediately overcome the risk of postpartum mothers experiencing baby blues to lead to postpartum maternal depression. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of complementary obstetric services on facial acupressure to reduce anxiety levels in postpartum mothers. This research method is quantitative with quasy experimental design with a two-group pre-test design – post test control group design. The treatment group was postpartum mothers who were given facial acupressure every 10-15 minutes for 3 days and the control group were postpartum mothers who were not given facial acupressure, The population in this study was 40 postpartum mothers, The samples used were postpartum mothers day 3-10 days, sampling by purposive sampling, 20 postpartum mothers in the treatment group and 20 in the control group. Bivariate anailisa used Wilcoxon's alternative test with research criteria for postpartum mothers 3-10 days, postpartum mothers for the first time and mothers who were willing to be respondents. The results of statistical tests using Wilcoxon obtained by the treated group with a P-value of 0.000 ( $P < 0.05$ ) showed that the hypothesis was accepted so that facial acupressure was effective in reducing anxiety levels in postpartum mothers.*

**Keywords:** Face acupressure, Post Partum, Anxiety level

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### 1. Introduction

The postpartum period, lasting six weeks after childbirth, involves the return of reproductive organs to their pre-pregnancy state. Fatigue, shifts in maternal roles, and mood swings like sadness and anxiety are common. Failure to address these issues promptly may result in baby blues and postpartum depression, requiring additional therapies, including facial acupressure [1].

Postpartum mothers experience fatigue, role adjustments, mood

alterations, potentially leading to baby blues and postpartum depression if not promptly addressed. Anxiety, a prevalent postpartum challenge, affects 20% of women with symptoms like panic, while an estimated 10 out of 40 encounter postpartum depression. Baby blues, impacting 50-80% of new mothers, are also prevalent [2].

During stress, anxiety activates the sympathetic nervous system, countered by relaxation invoking the parasympathetic nerves. Parasympathetic activation lowers amygdala activity,

relaxes muscles, and fosters parasympathetic dominance over the sympathetic response. Postpartum stressors often induce anxiety, disrupting physiological functions and recovery post-surgery. Progressive muscle relaxation emerges as a beneficial intervention, triggering muscle relaxation, increased blood flow, and endorphin release [3].

Recognizing these impacts, the researcher proposes facial acupressure as a relaxation strategy to engage parasympathetic muscles. This complementary therapy, focusing on acupressure points, aims at balancing the nervous system, stimulating endorphin release, and alleviating anxiety and stress [4]

Facial acupressure is considered a complementary therapy for alleviating anxiety. By targeting specific acupoints on the face using fingertip pressure, this practice aims to enhance energy flow, regulate blood and lymph circulation, boost immunity, promote relaxation, mental clarity, and improve skin health. Research by Sumantri et al. (2016) revealed varying levels of post-facial massage anxiety among participants, with the majority experiencing no anxiety (84.61%), followed by mild anxiety (12.82%) and moderate anxiety (2.56%) [5].

Facial acupressure has a deep-rooted history in Indonesia introduced by Chinese traders who settled in the country and was later adopted by the local community and the offspring of Chinese traders who intermarried with locals. Presently, complementary services have surfaced within midwifery care. According to Sumantri et al. (2016), a midwife in Blora independently integrates postnatal natural therapies like Facial acupressure, massageoxy, and bengkung wrapping into her practice. An anxiety evaluation conducted 24 hours post-treatment revealed that the vast majority, at 84.61%, exhibited minimal to no anxiety. This treatment demonstrates a significant impact on decreasing anxiety levels [6].

Interviews with postpartum women at a health center revealed that 10 out of 12 participants reported feeling anxious, while 2 did not. The anxiety stemmed from fatigue due to adjusting to motherhood, lack of support, and financial concerns. If left untreated, this anxiety poses risks of escalating to baby blues or postpartum depression. Based on these findings, the researcher aims to delve into the effectiveness of Facial Acupressure Therapy in alleviating anxiety among postpartum women at Lebaksu Health Centre

## 2. Method

Quantitative design with a quasi-experimental approach featuring a two-group pre-test - post-test control group setup. The treatment group underwent facial acupressure therapy, focusing on acupressure points like Yintang to alleviate anxiety. The facial acupressure sessions occurred every 10-15 minutes over a span of 3 days. Conversely, the control group did not receive any intervention. Anxiety levels were gauged using the HAMILTON RATING SCALE FOR ANXIETY (HARS), and the efficacy of facial acupressure was assessed by observing changes in respondents' anxiety levels based on their Hars scores.

The study centered on a population of postpartum mothers receiving care at Lebaksu Public Health Centre, Tegal Regency, involving a total of 40 individuals. Data collection took place between November and December 2023, with the sample comprising postpartum mothers within days 3-10 post-delivery. Sampling was done via purposive sampling, with 20 postpartum mothers assigned to the treatment group and another 20 to the control group.

To alleviate anxiety in postpartum women, facial acupressure was applied once daily for three consecutive days. The study's inclusion criteria involved postpartum women 3-10 days after childbirth, first-time mothers, and those open to interviews. Exclusion criteria

encompassed women unwilling to participate in interviews.

The effectiveness of facial acupressure in reducing postpartum anxiety levels was assessed using the bivariate analysis method and the alternative Wilcoxon test. The control group comprised postpartum mothers who did not receive facial acupressure, while the treatment group consisted of those who did receive it.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1.** Pretest and Posttest on Intervention Group

Anxiety Level	Pre test		Post Test	
	F	%	F	%
Mild	4	20	19	95
Moderate	16	80	1	5
Severe	0	0	0	0
Panic	0	0	0	0
Total	20	100	20	100

Based on Table I, pre-test results of respondents in the treatment group indicate 80% with moderate anxiety and 20% with mild anxiety. Post-test results show 95% with mild anxiety and 5% with moderate anxiety.

**Table 2.** Pretest and Posttest on Control Group

Anxiety Level	Pre test		Post Test	
	F	%	F	%
1. Mild	2	10	2	10
2. Moderate	18	90	18	90
3. Severe	0	0	0	0
4. Panic	0	0	0	0
Total	20	100	20	100

In Table 2, for the control group, pre-test and post-test results display 90% with moderate anxiety and 10% with mild anxiety.

**Table 3.** Effectiveness of Facial Acupressure Therapy in Reducing Anxiety in Postpartum Women

Group	P Value
Intervention	0,000
Control	0,14

Statistical test results using Wilcoxon for the treatment group yielded

a P-value of 0.000 ( $P < 0.05$ ), supporting the hypothesis that facial acupressure effectively reduces anxiety in postpartum mothers

#### Anxiety Level

Based on the research findings, the pre-test data of respondents in the treatment group indicated that 80% of individuals experienced moderate anxiety, while 20% reported mild anxiety. In contrast, the post-test results revealed that 95% of respondents experienced mild anxiety, with 5% reporting moderate anxiety.

In comparison, the pre-test and post-test results of participants in the control group demonstrated that 90% of individuals reported moderate anxiety, while 10% experienced mild anxiety.

Facial acupressure, a traditional Chinese therapy, has a longstanding history of usage spanning several centuries. In Indonesia, facial acupressure has gained popularity particularly among women, who often seek this therapy in reflexology centers and beauty clinics as part of their holistic treatment options [7].

One of dermatologist based in New York City stated that facial acupressure has been noted to enhance the lymphatic system's drainage function, crucial for absorbing and eliminating excess fluid, protein, toxins, and waste from the body. It is also said to promote improved blood circulation. The practice of facial acupressure offers various benefits, such as stress relief, anxiety reduction, and alleviation of fatigue [8].

Furthermore, facial acupressure is considered a supplementary therapy that can aid in managing stress and anxiety. By applying pressure on specific acupuncture points on the face, signals are transmitted to rebalance the nervous system or release endorphins, which are known to help alleviate pain and stress. Additionally, this therapy can be beneficial for postpartum mothers in reducing anxiety levels. The anxiety-reducing effects of facial acupressure are attributed to the stimulation of meridians

(secondary blood vessels) on the face, leading to enhanced blood circulation [9].

Researchers have noted that variances in anxiety levels among postpartum mothers stem from individual variances in coping mechanisms. Factors influencing maternal adaptation in the postpartum period include feelings of discomfort and fatigue, understanding the baby's needs, availability of support, expectations surrounding childbirth, prior experiences, maternal temperament, infant characteristics, and unexpected events related to childbirth. Social support, encompassing the presence and emotional involvement of the spouse and family members throughout the birthing process and postpartum period, plays a significant role in reducing anxiety levels [10].

Anxieties experienced by postpartum mothers can be influenced by both external and internal factors. External factors include social support, economic circumstances, and cultural expectations, while internal factors comprise the nature of stressors, which can change abruptly, and an individual's previous experiences in managing anxiety [11].

#### **Effectiveness of Facial Acupressure Therapy in Reducing Anxiety in Postpartum Women**

In a recent study investigating the efficacy of facial acupressure in reducing anxiety levels among postpartum mothers, statistical analysis utilizing the Wilcoxon test revealed a notably low P-value of 0.000 ( $P < 0.05$ ), suggesting that the null hypothesis was rejected, thereby indicating the effectiveness of facial acupressure in alleviating anxiety.

The underlying mechanisms through which facial acupressure mitigates anxiety are attributed to the manipulation of meridians located on the face, which results in improved blood circulation. This process triggers a cascade of physiological responses, including the balancing of the nervous system and the release of signaling molecules such as endorphins, known for

their analgesic and stress-relieving properties. These effects culminate in relaxation and support the overall healing process within the body [12].

The research findings indicate that anxiety levels were evaluated before and after a facial massage known as face totok. Prior to the treatment, 23 respondents (58.97%) experienced mild anxiety, while after the massage, 33 respondents (84.61%) reported no anxiety. The use of face packs demonstrated a notable impact on reducing anxiety scores, with a statistically significant effect ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $\rho = 0.00$ ). The difference in scores before (16.20) and after (8.46) the treatment was 7.74, suggesting that facial totok positively influences anxiety reduction in postpartum women [13].

Moreover, Kusumawati highlights the individual variances in anxiety levels among postpartum mothers, attributing these differences to diverse coping mechanisms. Factors influencing adaptation in this demographic range from feelings of discomfort and fatigue to knowledge of infant care, social support, and personal expectations related to childbirth. Particularly noteworthy is the crucial role of social support, including emotional assistance from spouses and families, in alleviating anxiety levels among postpartum mothers [14].

Building upon this premise, Saputri advocates for the integration of facial acupressure as a viable intervention for anxiety relief during the postpartum period. By leveraging the therapeutic pressure applied during facial acupressure, individuals can experience neural modulation and the release of endogenous chemicals such as endorphins, thereby promoting pain alleviation, stress reduction, and overall well-being [15].

#### **4. Conclusion**

The research findings from the treatment group, with a P-value of 0.000 ( $P < 0.05$ ), indicate that the hypothesis was accepted, demonstrating a reduction in anxiety levels and supporting the

conclusion that facial acupressure is effective in lowering anxiety levels in postpartum mothers. According to this research outcome, the effectiveness of facial acupressure in reducing anxiety levels among postpartum mothers can be attributed to the massage on the meridians (secondary blood vessels) on the face, which enhances blood circulation. The decrease in anxiety complaints among postpartum mothers is elucidated through scientific reasoning, highlighting that the pressure applied during facial acupressure serves to balance the nervous system and transmit signals such as endorphins that alleviate pain and stress, inducing relaxation and fostering the healing process across various bodily systems.

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