

Abstract

Title: Effects of Healing Touch (HT) on Postoperative Pain and Anxiety in Adults.

Question or Aim: The primary aim of this study was to identify if there was a difference in post-surgical patients' pain or anxiety after experiencing (HT).

Background: Post-surgical patients often experience high levels of pain, anxiety, and sleep disturbance. Non-pharmacologic interventions are not consistently used as adjuncts to medications to help manage these symptoms. Reductions in pain, anxiety and improved quality of life have been found in participants receiving HT.

Methods: A convenience sample of 40 post-operative inpatients with one group pre-post exploratory design was used. Patients were identified by the patient's primary nurse and referred to the HT Practitioner per standard process in this organization; prior to intervention, the HT Practitioner inquired if the patient was interested in participating in the research study and obtained consent. Participants completed a survey pre and post HT, reporting pain and anxiety on a 0-10 numeric rating scale. Descriptive data was used to present demographic data. Data for the pre and post surveys was summarized and analyzed using the paired t-test.

Results: The mean pain score prior to HT was 6.9 (SD 2.3) and post HT 4.1 (SD 2.3), demonstrating a significant decrease $p < .001$. Mean anxiety scores decreased significantly after HT from 7.1 (SD 2.8) to 2.9 (SD 2.1) $p < .001$. Thirty participants identified sleep as a goal of HT. Ten fell asleep, awoke as the session ended, returning to sleep. Three remained sleeping post session.

Limitations: Setting was one community hospital. There was variation in when HT was conducted for each participant following surgery.

Conclusions: Pain and anxiety scores decreased significantly following HT sessions.

Implications: Healing Touch, a holistic, non-pharmacological approach, in addition to standard care, may help with pain, anxiety and sleep in post-surgical patients.