International Journal of Advanced Psychiatric Nursing

Effectiveness of a structured meditation programme in reducing anxiety symptoms: A randomized controlled trial among adults with generalized anxiety disorder

Sasmita Rout and Prabhanshu

Abstract

Background: Anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent mental health conditions globally. Non-pharmacological therapies such as meditation are gaining recognition as effective adjuncts to standard treatment.

Objective: To examine the effectiveness of an 8-week structured meditation programme in reducing anxiety symptoms and enhancing psychological well-being among adults diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

Methods: A randomized controlled trial was conducted among 110 adults aged 25–50 years. Participants were assigned to either an experimental group (n = 55), which received guided meditation sessions for eight weeks, or a control group (n = 55), which received usual care. Anxiety levels were measured using the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale *(HAM-A)* and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale *(GAD-7)*, while psychological well-being was assessed using the World Health Organization Well-being Index *(WHO-5)* at pre-test, post-test, and 4-week follow-up.

Results: The experimental group demonstrated a significant reduction in anxiety scores (HAM-A: M = 25.9 → 18.0, t = 9.32, p<.001; GAD-7: M = 13.8 → 9.4, t = 8.17, p<.001). Between-group comparisons also revealed significant differences in post-test mean anxiety scores (p<.001). WHO-5 scores increased by 31.2% in the experimental group compared with 9.8% in the control group.

Conclusion: The structured meditation programme significantly reduced anxiety and improved overall well-being among adults with GAD. The findings support the integration of meditation into clinical and nursing interventions for holistic mental health care.

Keywords: Meditation, generalized anxiety disorder, anxiety reduction, psychological well-being, randomized controlled trial, nursing research