

# Effectiveness of Guided Imagery on Stress and Coping among Wives of Alcoholics : A Systematic Review

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## Abstract

**Background:** Alcoholism is one of the major health as well as social problem all over the world today. Alcoholism is a family problem, it causes stress in the relationship and misuse affects couples' relationship in a variety of negative ways. **Purpose:** To systematically review articles to evaluate the effectiveness of Guided Imagery on Stress and Coping among Wives of Alcoholics in selected De-addiction centre. **Method:** The search of significant articles including effectiveness of Guided Imagery on Stress and Coping among Wives of Alcoholics was carried out in PubMed/ Medline, and Google Scholar. The included studies both qualitative and quantitative were evaluated according to predefined quality criteria. Medline and PubMed were searched to identify peer-reviewed English-language studies published between 1985 and March 2018 reporting on stress and coping among wives of alcoholics. Total 300 studies were selected for review, out of which only 32 were found appropriate to be included in the study. **Results:** Analysis was done 90 papers were retrieved by the search. Among them, 30 were evaluated to be of higher quality. Studies recruiting sample of wives of alcoholics and excluded wives of non-alcoholics. **Conclusion:** Based on the review it was concluded that Wives of alcoholics had more stress and social disabilities which were directly related to the severity of husband's drinking pattern. Wives of alcoholics have highest rate of personality and emotional disturbance. Working women faced lesser stress as compared to non-working women. Wives of alcoholics had poor coping skills. They used maladaptive coping behavior to cope up with their husband's drinking problem such as but not limited to discord, fearful withdrawal and avoidance were commonly used maladaptive coping behaviors. Relaxation therapies were found to be effective to reduce stress and in improving coping. Guided imagery was very effective in reducing stress and improving adaptive coping among wives of alcoholics.

**Keywords:** Alcoholism, Wives of alcoholics, Guided Imagery, De-addiction.

## Introduction

Alcohol poisoning kills six people every day. Three of every four people killed by alcohol poisoning are men. <sup>(1)</sup>

Alcohol addiction causes stress and family disruption. Usually the children and wives of alcoholics have low self-esteem, decreased trust and are less communicative. Alcoholism is the third leading psychiatric problem in the world today. <sup>(2)</sup>

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Stress now a days is very common and one must learn how to deal with it and also about the stress reduction techniques. Relaxation therapies help to reduce stress and in improving one's ability to cope with stress and stressful situations. <sup>(2)</sup>

## Method

A systematic review was conducted by electronic search to identify articles in PubMed/ Medline, and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria were the studies including stress and coping among wives of alcoholics. Descriptive, cross sectional, systematic review, quasi experimental studies and qualitative studies were included and studies on children and other family members of alcoholics, case reports/series, randomized clinical trials regarding other relaxation therapies except guided imagery were excluded. The search generated a total 92 articles. Out of 90 articles, the full texts of the 32 articles were retrieved and reviewed.

## Results

Analysis was done. 92 papers were retrieved by the search. Among them, 30 were evaluated to be of higher quality. A systematic review was done to evaluate the effectiveness of guided imagery on stress and coping among wives of alcoholics.

The reviews were divided into three areas:

- related to the stress among the wives of alcoholics.
- related to the coping among wives of alcoholics.
- related to effect of psychological interventions on stress and coping among wives of alcoholics.
- **Review related to the stress among the wives of alcoholics.**

Out of 10 studies three studies (30%) were descriptive studies on stress among wives of alcoholics and revealed that wives of alcoholics had moderate to severe level of stress. (3, 4, 5) Another three studies (30%) were a comparative study which focused on comparison of stress level among alcoholic wives and non-alcoholic wives and they revealed that wives of alcoholics had more psychosocial stresses as compared to non-alcoholics spouses. (6,7,8) Two studies (20%) were non-experimental studies which revealed that the stressful life events are significantly higher among spouses of alcoholic in comparison to non-alcoholic's spouse (9, 10) One cross sectional study to evaluate the quality of life and stress in wives of alcoholics revealed that 55.9% were mothers with a mean age of 47.66 years and 23.8% had depressive symptoms. Mean stress among caregivers was 2.24. There was significant

correlation in quality of life, depression and stress of caregivers. (11) One more exploratory study to assess the role of work in lives of wives of alcoholics revealed that majority of working wives reported minimal negative impact of their husbands' drinking on all areas of their work functioning. The working wives described work as a positive experience they faced the issues such as changing jobs, absenteeism and discussing husband's drinking at work. None of the study revealed that the wives of alcoholics had no stress. (12)

### Sample reviews:

A descriptive study was conducted to assess the level of stress among spouses of alcoholic men admitted at ranipokhri community, Dehradun. Fifty spouses of alcoholic were selected for study by using purposive sampling technique. Tool used for the study were: modified four point likert scale to assess the stress level among spouses of alcoholics. The study results revealed that majority of the women whose husband are victim of alcohol addiction (M = 17.18, SD = 6.08) were having moderate level of stress (42.3%).<sup>4</sup>

A comparative study was conducted to assess the stress levels among wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics at hanumanahalli village, Kolar district. A sample of sixty, 30 wives of alcoholics and 30 wives of non-alcoholics were selected by using purposive sampling technique. A tool used to measure stress level was Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) with the help of Interview Technique. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 21.418$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ) between the stress level scores of the wives of alcoholics and the wives of non-alcoholics ( $\chi^2 = 9.180$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The study concluded that the research should need to focus on the impact of stress on health.<sup>8</sup>

### • **Reviews related to the coping among wives of alcoholics.**

Out of 11, six studies (46.15%) were descriptive studies on coping strategies among wives of alcoholics and it was found that major coping style used by wives were Avoidance (53%), Discord (57.5%), Fearful Withdrawal (40.4%) and Sexual Withdrawal (25.8%) which were maladaptive strategies of coping. (13, 14,15,16,17,18) Two studies (15.38%) were exploratory studies on assessing the coping strategies among wives of alcoholics and there was difference in the coping strategies between the treatment and non treatment groups. (19,20) Another two studies (15.38%) were

non-experimental studies to assess the psychosocial problems and coping among wives of alcoholics and it was found that about 71.1% women had adaptive and 28.3% showed mal-adaptive coping. Majority of women had physiological problems [13.13%] followed by psychological problems [12.79%] and psycho-social problems [7.40%]. While 6.6% women had

Financial problems and only 3.92% had sexual problems. <sup>(21,22)</sup>

### **Sample reviews:**

A descriptive study was conducted to assess the coping strategies among wives of alcoholics. Hundred wives of alcoholics were selected in the study by purposive sampling technique. The tool used was 'Coping with Drinking Questionnaire'. Result of the study revealed that the avoidance was the most commonly endorsed coping behavior. Further the study revealed that there was a significant correlation between all the coping components and alcohol related problems. There was no correlation between neurotism scores and coping behavior. The study concluded that both personality and situational variables play a role in determining the coping behavior of the wives of alcoholics. <sup>(15)</sup>

A descriptive study was conducted to assess the ways of coping among the wives of alcoholics staying with their husbands. The objectives of the study were to delineate how wives in India cope with their alcoholic husbands and what motivates them to carry on in spite of the husband's addiction. A total 200 wives of alcoholics were selected and data was collected by tool "Coping Questionnaires". Results showed that the majority of wives of alcoholics used escape-avoidance as a coping strategy. Further the coping strategies were evaluated by substantial scores translated to relative scores to find out the highest proportion for each coping strategies mean score from 0.14 to 0.16. <sup>17</sup>

### **• Reviews related to effect of psychological interventions on stress and coping among wives of alcoholics.**

Two out of nine studies (22.2%) assessed the effect of guided imagery along with other interventions on stress and coping among wives of alcoholics and it was found that guided imagery when combined with other interventions was effective enough to reduce stress among wives of alcoholics. <sup>(23,24)</sup> Further two more studies (22.2%) assessed the effectiveness of guided

imagery alone on stress reduction among wives of alcoholics and it was found that guided imagery therapy was effective in reducing the level of stress among wives of alcoholics. <sup>(25,26)</sup> One randomized control study to assess effects of coping skills training, group support, and information for spouses of alcoholics and the study results revealed that changing of coping strategies in spouses of alcoholics can be successful with only one single information session, whereas the reduction of mental symptoms may need longer treatment. <sup>(27)</sup> One quasi experimental study to assess the effectiveness of coping strategies on stress and coping among the care givers of alcohol dependents revealed that the coping Strategies was significantly effective in improving the coping and reduction of stress among the caregivers of alcohol dependents. <sup>(28)</sup> One more experimental study to evaluate the effectiveness of three different interventional programmes i.e. Coping Skills Training, Group Support, and Information for spouses of alcoholics and it was found that all the three groups score similarly on 24 months on the four scales which showed long term retention of programme effectiveness is still questioned. <sup>(29)</sup> Further one more pre experimental study to assess the effectiveness of psycho-educational package on stress and coping among wives of alcoholics revealed that the wives of alcoholics experience more stress and the Psycho-educational package was highly effective in improving the coping level among wives of alcoholics. <sup>(30)</sup>

### **Sample reviews:**

A quasi experimental study was conducted to assess the ways of coping among 200 wives of alcoholics who were staying with their husbands at residential substance abuse treatment facility in Charleston Centre Clinic. Samples were selected by using the convenient sampling technique and the tool used was DASS Stress Scale to assess the level of stress. Guided Imagery technique and intellectual life skill training was given to the spouses of alcoholics. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between Guided imagery and intellectual life skill training and the stress reduction ( $r(148) = .17, p = .07$ ) among the spouse of alcoholics. <sup>(27)</sup>

A Pre-experimental one group pre-test post test study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of Guided imagery on stress among spouses of alcoholics at de-addiction ward in Government Rajaji hospital, Madurai. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples and the sample size was 40. The

data was collected by DASS Stress scale with interview technique before and after Guided imagery. Study subjects were given with Guided imagery technique once a day for 20 minutes for the period of 7 days. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean score of stress before and after Guided imagery as the calculated 't' value was 19.613 at 0.05 level of significance. Further there was no any significant association between the stress score and selected demographic variables. The study concluded that the Guided imagery was cost effective, non invasive, non pharmacological complementary and alternative therapy to reduce the level of stress among spouse of alcoholics. (28)

### Conclusion

Based on the above stated reviews it was found that: Wives of alcoholics had more stress and social disabilities which were directly related to the severity of husband's drinking pattern. Wives of alcoholics have highest rate of personality and emotional disturbance. Working women faced lesser stress as compared to non-working women. Wives of alcoholics had poor coping skills. They used maladaptive coping behavior to cope up with their husband's drinking problem such as but not limited to discord, fearful withdrawal and avoidance were commonly used maladaptive coping behaviors. Engaged and tolerant were commonly used adaptive coping styles by wives of alcoholics. The Psychological interventions such as Guided Imagery, Paced Auditory Serial Addition Test, Coping Skills Training, Group Support and Information, psycho-educational package and intellectual life skill training were effective enough in reducing stress and improving coping among wives of alcoholics.

**Conflict of Interest:** NIL

**Funding Sources:** Self

**Ethical approval:** The ethical clearance was obtained from university research ethics committee of Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed To be University) Mullana, Ambala (MMDU/IEC/197) and the study was carried out in accordance with the guidelines laid by Indian Council of Medical Research ICMR(2006). The permission was taken to conduct the study in the De-addiction centre (from Chief Medical Officer of Civil Hospital Ambala city). The written consent from the wives of alcoholics was collected prior to the study. The purpose for carrying out research project was

explained and assurance of confidentiality was given to the participants.

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