

EFFECT OF SOCIO-ART WORKING GROUP THERAPY IN REDUCING THE SYMPTOMS OF HALLUCINATIONS IN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

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ABSTRACT

Background: Schizophrenia is a chronic illness with considerable impact on individuals and their families. One of the symptoms of schizophrenia is hallucination. The treatment goals are reducing the symptoms and maintaining the recovery from the effects of illness.

Objective: This study aimed to analyze the effect of socialization and art-working group therapy in reducing the symptoms of hallucinations.

Methods: This study used a pre-experimental design with one-group pretest-posttest involved 60 patients aged between 12 and 55 years diagnosed with schizophrenia in the Community-Integrated Health Care in East Java. The Symptoms of Hallucinations Checklist was used to assess the hallucination symptoms. Data were analyzed using Wilcoxon signed rank test.

Results: Findings showed that there was a statistically significance difference between pretest and posttest score after the socialization and art-working group therapy with p-value 0.000 ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Socialization and art-working group therapy had a significant effect in reducing the symptoms of hallucinations in patients with schizophrenia.

Key words: Socialization, art-working, group therapy, and hallucinations

BACKGROUND

Schizophrenia is a chronic illness with considerable impact on individuals and their families.¹ There are two main symptoms in schizophrenic patients, namely positive and negative symptoms. The 'positive' symptoms of schizophrenia include hallucinations, such as hearing voices; and delusions, such as paranoid

thoughts. Additionally, the 'negative' symptoms consist of feeling restless, attention disorder, and reduction in speech content.¹

The treatment goals of schizophrenia are reducing the symptoms and maintaining the recovery from the effects of illness. Antipsychotic medication reduces the symptoms of schizophrenia;

however the problem is still arising when many people have issues in medication adherence. It increases the risk of relapse, self-harm and re-hospitalization. Meanwhile, psychotherapy and social interventions are used in combination with pharmacotherapy to improve the health of schizophrenic patients.¹⁻³

The combination of socialization and art-working group therapy provides several goals. The socialization program itself increases patients' involvement in activity of discussion in a team. Additionally, during discussion, the patients make several art projects based on the topic provided by health professionals. Patients with hallucinations could have a positive effect from an environment that provides companionship, so they would not feel alone and maintain their functional abilities.⁴ Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the effect of socialization and art-

working group therapy in reducing the symptoms of hallucinations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Schizophrenia has two main symptoms, the positive symptoms and the negative symptoms. The 'positive' symptoms include hallucinations, and delusions. Hallucinations often experienced as the absence of external stimuli, which patients have social isolation and feel frightened with other people. This condition impacts on patients' behavior and functional capacity. Patients have loss abilities to engage with people in workplace and other activities (see **Figure 1**).⁵ The 'negative' symptoms consist of feeling restless, attention disorder, and speech impairment. The combination of socialization and art-working group therapy is provided to reduce the symptoms of hallucinations in patients with schizophrenia.

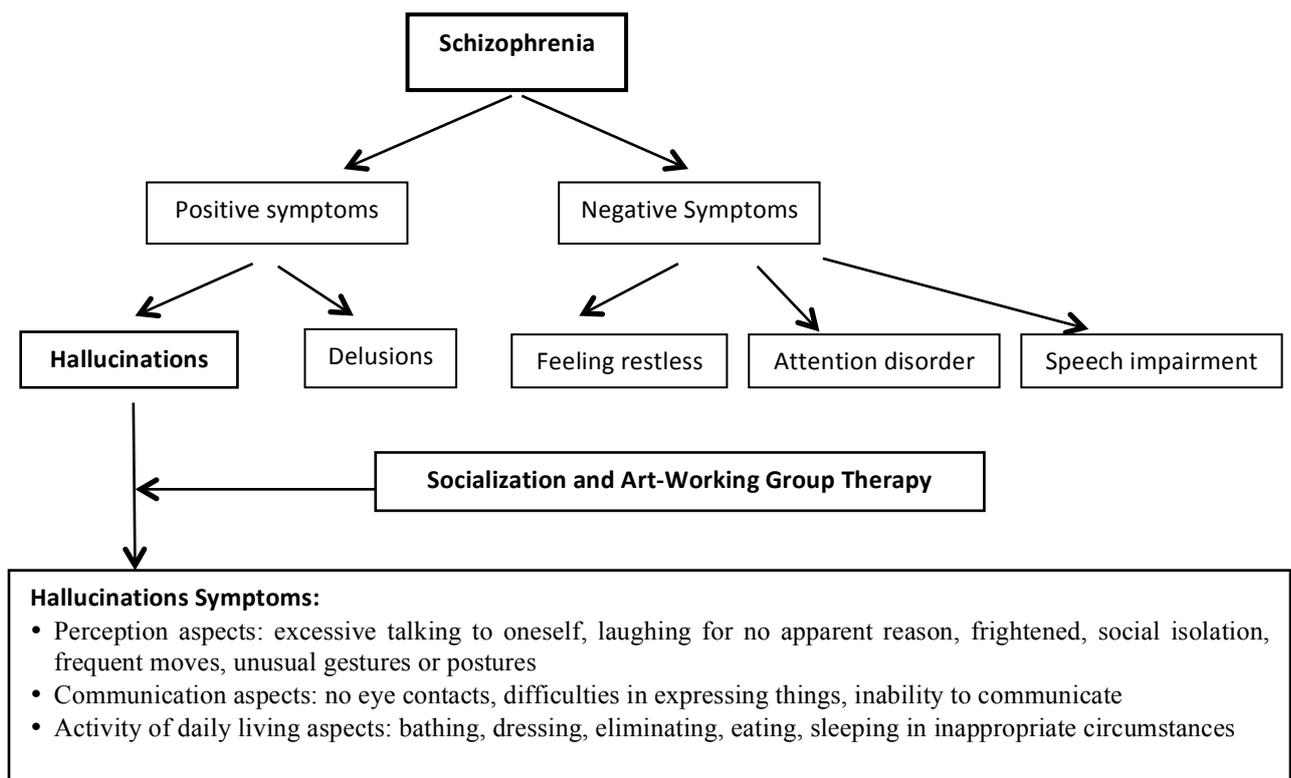


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework

METHODS

Study design

This was a pre-experimental design with one group pretest-posttest to analyze the effect of socialization and art-working group therapy in reducing the symptoms of hallucinations.

Population and sample

Sixty patients from five villages in a Community-Integrated Health Care in East Java were included using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were: patients with schizophrenia and showed positive symptoms of hallucinations, such as hearing voices. Respondents who were not cooperative and either family did not give consent for therapy were excluded from the study. The study was conducted between December and January 2016.

Instruments

The Symptoms of Hallucinations Checklist developed by the researcher was used to measure the symptoms of hallucinations in this study. The instrument consisted of 25 items, namely the aspects of perceptions (11 items), communication (6 items), and daily living activities (8 items). The reliability (Cronbach alpha) of the instrument was 0.941.

Intervention

This program was held in a place where health professionals often used for a meeting or therapy, called as “Bengkel Artis”. There were four sessions, which was scheduled once every two weeks.



Figure 2. Respondents were making “a miniature of house”

The therapy of socialization and art-working group therapy was performed by the researchers assisted by health professionals and cadre for approximately 1 hour. It consisted of: 1) Familiarizing respondents to all groups by facilitating clients to introduce themselves and describing their appearances and hobbies. The goals for the first session was to

identify the characteristics of respondents during session and producing a simple art, “Drawing my favorite things”, 2) Describing “my journey” to all groups. The goals for this session was to introduce the benefits of conversation with other people and producing “a story book” using flannelled materials, 3) Introducing how to ask for requests from other people. This

session aimed to familiarize respondents in making requests from their families, friends or neighbors. When making requests, the respondents were asked to make an eye contact, sit next to their friends and explained their requests. During this session, in order to improve their conversation, “a miniature of house” from ice cream sticks was produced (**Figure 2**), and 4) Engaging respondents to other group member from different village. The last session aimed to facilitate each respondent to other group member by describing his/her art-working productions. In this session, the researchers observed their abilities to communicate and the symptoms presence of hallucinations.

Data analysis

In data analysis, mean and standard deviation were described using SPSS version 20. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test

was used to find any significant difference of hallucination symptoms exist among the pre and post therapy score.

Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethic Committee, Faculty of Public Health, Airlangga University on April 2016 (No: 152-KPK). A written approval from the site including families was also obtained. Informed consent was performed in each participant.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents

As shown in the Table 1, the majority of respondents aged over 20 years as many as 55 (91.7%) people, with 40 (66.7%) females and 20 (33.3%) males. Of all respondents, 61.7% reported duration of illness less than 5 years.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents based on age, gender, and duration of illness

Characteristics of respondents	n	%
Age		
< 20 years	5	8.3
> 20 years	55	91.7
Total	60	100
Gender		
Female	40	66.7
Male	20	33.3
Total	60	100
Duration of illness		
< 5 years	37	61.7
> 5 years	23	38.3
Total	60	100

Difference in hallucination symptoms between pretest and posttest

The study aimed to analyze the effect of socialization and art-working group therapy in reducing the symptoms of hallucinations. The instrument was scored

by both the health professionals from the Community Integrated Health Care and the researchers. The results of the pre and post therapy of hallucinations symptoms scores are shown below:

Table 2. Difference in hallucination symptoms between pretest and posttest using Wilcoxon signed rank test (n=60)

Hallucinations Symptoms	Mean ± SD	P-value
Perceptions		0.000*
Pretest	33.27±1.351	
Posttest	25.23±1.267	
Communication		
Pretest	17.18±0.813	
Posttest	14.20±1.482	
Daily Living Activities		
Pretest	20.87±0.929	
Posttest	20.53±0.873	

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test showed p-value 0.000 (<0.05). It can be concluded that there was a statistically significance difference between pretest and posttest score after the socialization and art-working group therapy.

DISCUSSION

The key principles in managing hallucinations are promoting a good environment, which supports behavior change among schizophrenic patients. Therefore, it will optimize medication adherence and promote the abilities of person's life.⁶ Long term group therapy is needed to improve better effects on quality of life, medication adherence and functional abilities.⁷ However, schizophrenic patients should be always motivated for group work therapy.

Combining the therapy of socialization and art-working group activities could promote better conversations between respondents and provide external stimuli to reduce the symptoms of hallucinations. The program of art therapy has benefits to make a person understand them better and giving powerful feelings.⁸ Art therapy including physical activity could significantly increase the level of cognitive, memories, mood in schizophrenia. Activities in the group also have the potential function to

improve quality of life for people with schizophrenia in two aspects, namely physical and psychological healths.⁹⁻¹¹

Art therapy could also be effective in promoting better behavior in schizophrenia patients who were not responding to medications.^{11,12} Further, art therapy has specific therapeutic benefits for respondents, such as focusing on what they were doing, learning to responds well, using gestures appropriately, following rules during activities, interacting with others and promoting independence.^{13,14} Through community health center, respondents who live in rural areas have facilitators to undertake and create any other art activities to improve patients' well being. Studies showed that art activities in communities could promote better environment compared to activities which usually held in hospital.¹⁵ Moreover, respondents stated that art activities could reduce feelings of stress, enhance self-esteem and improve decision making abilities.¹⁶

This study provides group activities that took place on a fortnightly basis in four sessions. Facilitators of these groups were recruited from nurses and health cadre in community health center to encourage respondents to follow the therapy. After the therapy session, each respondent had opportunities to explore their thoughts and feelings related to their

abilities during activities and also level of hallucination symptoms. While standard care was also provided by community health center, these kinds of activities could improve their daily routines and respondents agreed to undertake art activities at home.

This study did not use the intervention with pre-post test with control group to enhance validity of the study. Study respondents were limited in size and recruited from community integrated health center in five villages from geographically isolated area, so the researchers had to pick them up to the health center to do the activities. Nevertheless, the results were sufficiently promising to justify for further research.

CONCLUSION

People living with schizophrenia need a long-term treatment, which they may not follow their treatment properly and have a relapse. To reduce the risk of relapse, self-harm and re-hospitalization, psychotherapy and social interventions are used in combination with pharmacotherapy to improve the health of schizophrenic patients. This study revealed that the combination of socialization and art-working group therapy reduced the symptoms of hallucinations. In addition, patients with schizophrenia also have a good environment providing companionship in order not to feel alone and maintain their functional abilities.

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