INTRODUCTION

- High maternal stress is an independent risk factor in pre-term birth (PTB), which is a leading cause of adverse birth outcomes (Jallo et al., 2008).
- Pregnant adolescents have an increased risk for high levels of stress and anxiety (Lesser, Anderson & Griffin, 1998).
- Fatigue and lack of energy are major symptoms identified during pregnancy (Elek, Fisk, & Hudson, 1997).
- Research has identified Guided Imagery (GI) as a promising prevention strategy to manage stress in pregnant women (Jallo et al., 2008).
- There is a lack of research for evidence-based interventions to reduce stress and increase occupational well-being in pregnant adolescents.

Purpose:
To investigate the effectiveness of GI intervention for increasing occupational well-being, reducing perceived stress, and increasing perceived energy and alertness in pregnant adolescents.

RESULTS

- No statistical significance was found for the OWBQ or the PSM-9. The mean score per item for the OBWQ and PSM-9 decreased by 0.45 and 0.47 points, respectively.

Figure 1. Psychological Stress Measure (PSM-9) and Occupational Well-Being (OBWQ) Mean Pretest and Posttest Scores

Note. High scores indicate high levels of well-being and perceived stress.

- No statistical significance was found for increase in perceived energy and alertness, however the mean score per item for Subject 1 increased by 2.75 points.

Figure 2. Perceived Energy and Alertness Mean Pretest and Posttest Scores by Subject

Note. Perceived energy and alertness is determined by item 6 on the PSM-9, “I feel full of energy and alert”. High scores indicate a high level of energy.

DISCUSSION

- Although GI had no statistical significance on stress or well-being, the slight overall reduction in perceived stress levels suggest that GI is a promising intervention for pregnant adolescents.
- Due to the complexity of well-being, stress, and energy, there are many confounding factors that may have had an impact on the results.
- The timing of the post-test may have been too soon after the GI session, at a point where participants may have felt too relaxed or sluggish. Participants may have felt more alert later in the day.
- The slight trend in perceived stress may strengthen with further research using a larger sample size and longer length of intervention.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Occupational therapists play a role in stress management strategies in order to help clients meet the demands of their daily life and effectively function in society.
- By reducing stress levels in pregnant adolescents, OTs can improve the health of the mother and the child. Reducing adverse birth outcomes will impact the practice of pediatric OT.
- GI is a widely accepted intervention for stress management.

SELECTED REFERENCES


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