

The Emotional and Awareness Dimensions of Cupping Therapy among Young Adults in Kurnool Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Recently, cupping therapy has gained popularity and is now commonly used in various regions worldwide. However, some patients exhibit resistance to this treatment due to the visually unpleasant marks it leaves on the skin, which can evoke negative reactions. This study aimed to explore the awareness and emotional aspects associated with cupping therapy. In this pilot study, 100 healthy volunteers aged between 15 -50 years were exposed to emotionally evocative visual stimuli representing fear, disgust, happiness, neutral emotions, and cupping, along with control images. Prior to the experiment, participants completed the Fear of Pain Questionnaire-III. The findings revealed that awareness was evident in 21% of the participants, while negative emotions were observed in 54% of them.

Keywords: *Cupping Therapy, Emotional Aspects, Awareness, Young Adults*

Cupping therapy, widely practiced in China, India, Korea, the Middle East, and parts of Europe, stands as one of the oldest documented medical methods. Also known as Hijama in Arabic, this traditional holistic folk therapy has been utilized across different cultures since ancient times. Serving as a key element in ancient medicinal practices, Hijama has been instrumental in treating various medical and surgical conditions. Dry cupping involves suctioning the skin into the cup without causing scarring, while wet cupping involves making incisions to draw blood into the cup. This negative pressure creates a vacuum in the cup, causing the affected skin to rise, thereby promoting blood circulation, toxin removal, and overall health improvement. Additionally, it aids in reducing pain, inflammation, and infections. Despite its benefits, some patients express fear of cupping therapy due to the temporary circular red marks it leaves on the skin. These marks, though harmless and fading within a few days, can trigger negative emotional reactions in patients, influenced by their expectations and anxieties. Understanding patients' arousal states based on their responses to emotional stimuli is crucial in comprehending the underlying impact of cupping therapy. The negative pressure generated during cupping therapy causes expansion of the skin and underlying tissues, as well as dilation of capillaries, leading to improved microcirculation, tissue detoxification, and relief from muscle tension. While cupping therapy may result in temporary redness, petechiae, ecchymosis, or bruising, these symptoms are typically mild and resolve within 3 weeks.

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However, some patients remain apprehensive about the therapy due to concerns about its aesthetic effects. Patients' expectations and perceptions significantly influence the therapeutic outcomes and side effects of cupping therapy. Positive expectations can enhance therapeutic efficacy, while negative expectations can diminish it. Therefore, assessing both the valence and arousal levels of patients is essential for understanding the intrinsic effects of cupping therapy. This study aims to raise awareness and evaluate the emotional aspects of cupping therapy. Participants will rate the valence and arousal of visual stimuli depicting fear, disgust, happiness, neutral emotion, and cupping therapy. Through analyzing participants' responses to emotional stimuli, we will assess the spatial organization of their reactions in a two-dimensional psychophysical space.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant college committee at the Department of Physiotherapy, Kurnool Andhra Pradesh. Prior to the study, permission was sought from a physiotherapy clinic in the vicinity of Kurnool Andhra Pradesh. The study's objectives were explained to all participants, who were then screened for eligibility based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Consent forms were provided to those willing to participate, ensuring that they responded accurately to all questionnaire items. A pilot study was conducted with 100 healthy participants aged 18-35 years, and the collected data were analyzed. Any participant queries were addressed, and awareness about the study was disseminated among the participants. All participants completed the Awareness questionnaire and the Fear of Pain Questionnaire (FPQ-III), which assesses fear across various stimuli that may induce pain. Participants were instructed to sit comfortably in an armchair placed 70 cm away from the screen, maintaining a straight gaze. They were informed that they would be shown images containing emotional components, including cupping therapy treatment photos and post-treatment marks. After viewing the images, participants were asked to use a visual analogue scale to indicate their level of discomfort. This allowed for the comparison of patients' pain tolerance levels and their corresponding arousal levels. The study aimed to determine the correlation between the arousal levels elicited by cupping therapy images and FPQ-III scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

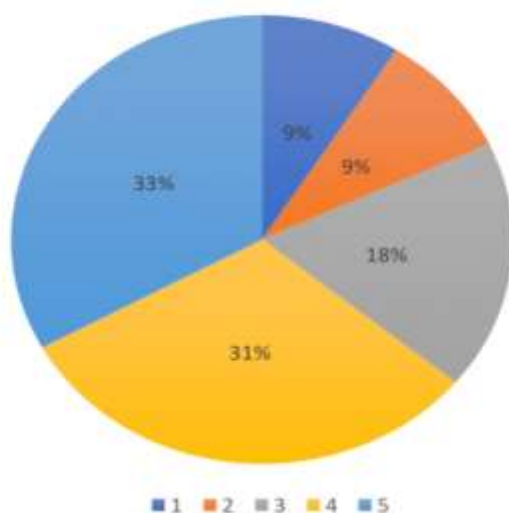
Table No. 01: Fear of pain Questionnaire

QUESTION:	Being in an automobile accident
MEAN ± STANDARD DEVIATION	3.72 ± 1.2397

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Figure No.1: Fear of pain Questionnaire

Being in automobile accident



INTERPRETATION

In the figure, the Fear of Pain Questionnaire, using a scale from 1 to 5, indicated that 9 individuals chose 1 (not at all), 9 individuals selected 2 (a little), 18 individuals opted for 3 (a fair amount), 31 individuals chose 4 (very much), and 33 individuals selected 5 (extreme).

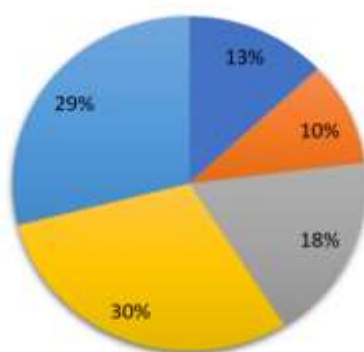
Table No. 02: Fear of pain Questionnaire

QUESTION:	Breaking your arm
MEAN ± STANDARD DEVIATION	3.74 ± 1.3443

Figure No. 2: Fear of Pain Questionnaire

Breaking your arm

1 2 3 4 5



INTERPRETATION

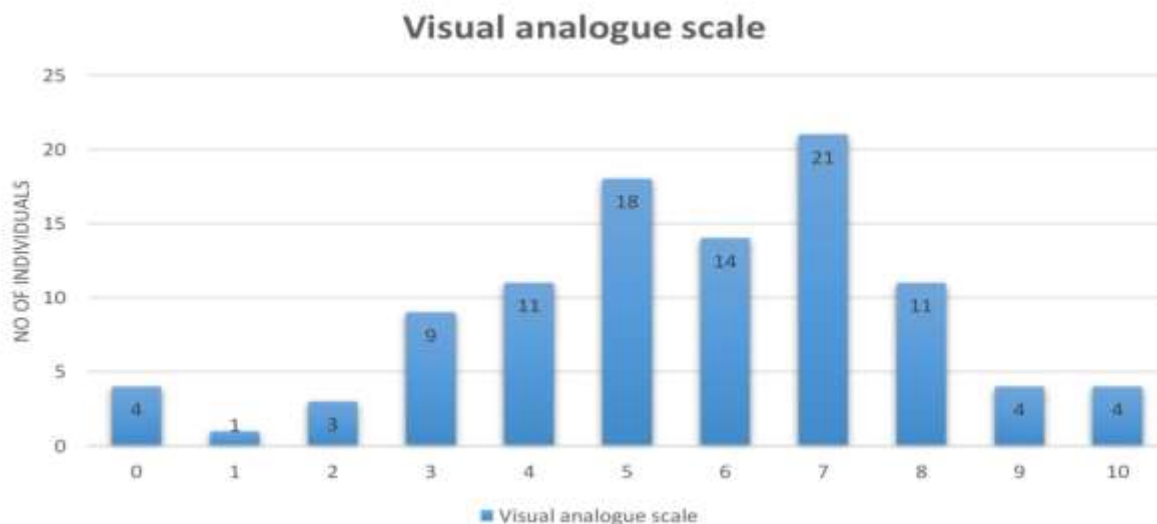
In the figure, the Fear of Pain Questionnaire, ranging from 1 to 5, showed that 13 individuals chose 1 (not at all), 10 individuals selected 2 (a little), 18 individuals opted for 3 (a fair amount), 30 individuals chose 4 (very much), and 29 individuals selected 5 (extreme).

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Table no.3: Visual Analogue Scale

VISUAL ANALOGUE SCALE	
MEAN ± STANDARD DEVIATION	5.57 ± 2.21680

Figure No 3: Visual Analogue Scale



INTERPRETATION

In the visual analogue scale graph, 4 individuals indicated 0 (no pain), 1 individual chose option 1, 3 individuals selected 2, 9 individuals chose 3, 11 individuals selected 4, 18 individuals opted for 5, 14 individuals chose 6, 21 individuals selected 7, 11 individuals opted for 8, 4 individuals chose 9, and 4 individuals selected 10 (extreme pain).

DISCUSSION

In our study, a total of 100 participants (60 females and 40 males) with an average age of 22.2 ± 1.9796 participated. Among them, 79 participants had prior knowledge of cupping therapy. Additionally, 36 participants expressed fear of cupping therapy due to the marks it leaves behind, while 31 participants considered avoiding the therapy due to perceived pain. Only nine participants had previous experience with cupping therapy. A previous study conducted by Minyoung Hong (2020) involved 25 participants (14 females; average age = 24.6 ± 0.8 years). The study reported significantly higher arousal ratings (5.22 ± 0.48 vs. 1.87 ± 0.32 , $t = 7.877$, $p < 0.001$) for cupping therapy images compared to control images. Furthermore, a significant positive correlation was observed between arousal ratings for cupping therapy and Fear of Pain Questionnaire (FPQ) scores ($r = 0.540$, $p < 0.01$). In Table 1, the Fear of Pain Questionnaire showed a mean and standard deviation of 3.72 ± 1.2397 . Out of 100 participants, 33 selected 4 (very much) on the fear of pain scale, while 31 selected 5 (extreme). Similarly, in Table 4, the mean and standard deviation for the Fear of Pain Questionnaire were 3.74 ± 1.3443 . Among the participants, 30 individuals selected 4 (very much) and 29 individuals selected 5 (extreme). Adulraheem alshareef (2020) documented that nearly 60% of participants expressed fear of cupping therapy, with the main concern being injury (37%). Statistically significant relationships were found between participant gender and the cupping procedure ($p = 0.003$), fear of undergoing cupping therapy ($p < 0.001$), and preference for cupping over blood donation ($p = 0.002$). The

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majority of participants preferred donating blood over receiving cupping therapy. After viewing the images, participants' responses on the visual analogue scale were as follows: 4 individuals selected 0 (no pain), 1 individual selected option 1, 3 individuals selected 2, 9 individuals selected 3, 11 individuals selected 4, 18 individuals selected 5, 14 individuals selected 6, 21 individuals selected 7, 11 individuals selected 8, 4 individuals selected 9, and 4 individuals selected 10 (extreme pain). The mean and standard deviation for the visual analogue scale were calculated as 5.57 ± 2.21680 .

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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