



The Effects of Adolescent Therapeutic Group Therapy and Cognitive Therapy on Emotional Mental Disorders of Adolescents

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has changed adolescents' lives, especially their daily activities. Therefore, they have to adapt to virtual school. This study aims to determine the effects of therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy in preventing emotional mental disorders of adolescents who have virtual schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study employed a quasi-experimental pre-post test design with the control group. The research sample was selected using purposive sampling and random sampling techniques; the sample size was 60 respondents divided into two groups. Intervention group 1 consisted of 30 people receiving therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy. Meanwhile, intervention group 2 consisted of 30 people receiving therapeutic group therapy without cognitive therapy. The univariate analysis employed the frequency distribution and central tendency. Meanwhile, the bivariate analysis employed a repeated ANOVA test for normally distributed data and the Friedman test for not normally distributed data. The results show that the combination of therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy has a significant effect on preventing emotional mental disorders in adolescents. This combination therapy is recommended to apply to prevent emotional mental disorders in adolescents who have virtual schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Adolescents; Cognitive therapy; Mental-emotional disorders; Therapeutic group therapy.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic still spreads globally as evidenced by a report that 233 million people in the world were confirmed COVID-19 on 1 October 2021 (WHO, 2021). The number of adolescents who were confirmed positive for COVID-19 has increased. The global data 13 on September 2021 show that 13.6 million adolescents aged 15-24 years (14.5%) experiencing COVID-19 (WHO, 2021). Meanwhile, the Health Research and Development Agency (Risksdas) reports that 362,657 Indonesian adolescents (9.53%) aged 15-24

years are confirmed COVID-19 positive on 13 August (Litbangkes, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed adolescents' lives, especially their daily activities, and their school learning methods changed into distance learning. If this distance learning occurs over a long period, the students' psychological condition will disrupt and they will experience several problems, such as anxiety, fear, excessive worry, stress, and depression (Mukti et al., 2020). These conditions certainly affect adolescents' developmental tasks. If adolescents cannot fulfill these developmental tasks, their adulthood development can be at risk and emotional mental disorders can occur.

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WHO reports that 1 of 6 adolescents aged 10-19 years experience emotional mental disorders; this number is equal to 16% in the world (WHO, 2021). Meanwhile, UNICEF reports that 27% of adolescents experience anxiety and 15% of them experience depression in the last seven days due to the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF, 2021). Meanwhile, in 2018 Riskesdas reports that 9.8% of Indonesian adolescents over 15 years old have experienced emotional mental disorders (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2018). The prevalence of emotional mental disorders in Riau Province is 10.45%, and it is estimated that approximately 467,727 people aged above 15 years (9%), especially in Pekanbaru City, experience emotional mental problems (Riskesdas, 2018). This figure shows that Riau has a 0.65 time as a high percentage as the National figure. In other words, mental-emotional disorders can occur anywhere.

Mental-emotional problems in adolescents will negatively impact their developmental tasks if these problems are not prevented by promotive or preventive efforts. Emotional mental disorders make adolescents at a high risk of experiencing behavioral problems if these disorders are not detected earlier (Direktur Jenderal Pencegahan Pengendalian Penyakit, 2021). Such a condition will affect adolescents' development, personal lives, families, and environment. Therefore, it is pivotal to make efforts that prevent the occurrence of emotional mental disorders.

Adolescents' promotive and preventive efforts to prevent emotional mental disorders can be given through therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy. Arifuddin & Pangaribuan (2021) prove that therapeutic group therapy enables adolescents to improve psychosocial and emotional development. Moreover, therapeutic group therapy in adolescents can help them meet their needs positively, become meaningful to their peer groups, and form self-identity (Daulay et al., 2021). Cognitive therapy can also increase adolescents' self-esteem in Special Child Development Institutions (Effendi et al., 2016). In addition, cognitive therapy can reduce the anxiety levels of bullying victims (Febriana et al., 2016).

The above-mentioned theories conclude that the combination between therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy has never been applied to adolescents. Therefore, researchers are interested in researching the combination of therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy to prevent emotional mental disorders experienced by adolescents who have virtual schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Method

This quantitative research employed the quasi-experiment pre-post control group design with a purposive sampling technique. This study compared intervention group 1 and intervention group 2. The research respondents were adolescents aged 14-16 and having virtual schools for 6 months. Each group consisted of 30 teenagers. Intervention group 1 received therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy. Meanwhile, intervention group 2 only received therapeutic group therapy.

The Therapeutic Group Therapy for adolescents consisted of 6 sessions: stimulation of the biological and psychosexual development, cognitive and language aspects, emotional and personality aspects, moral, spiritual, social aspects, and talent and creativity aspects, and monitoring evaluation of experiences and benefits. Each session was conducted for 45-60 minutes. Cognitive therapy consisted of 4 sessions: identify unpleasant events that generate negative automatic thoughts and combat these automatic thoughts (session 1); against second negative automatic thoughts in adolescents (session 2); identify support systems both from within and outside the respondent's family (session 3); evaluating benefits against negative thoughts (session 4).

The data were collected by using the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). SDQ questionnaire was adopted from Kemenkes RI (2018) in the Technical Manual for the Prevention and Control of Emotional Mental Disorders which has been tested for validity and reliability. This study carried out four measurements: pre-test, post-test 1, post-test 2, and post-test 3. The data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate analyses. In this study, the normally distributed data were analyzed using repeated anova while the abnormally distributed data were analyzed using the Friedman test. This study has met the ethical considerations and was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Indonesia (Permit ID: Ket-30/UN2.F12.D1.2.1/PPM.00.02/2022)..

Result and Discussion

Changes in emotional mental disorders of adolescents in intervention group 1 before and after receiving therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy and in intervention group 2 before and after being given therapeutic group therapy without cognitive therapy were analyzed using the Friedman test. This test was selected because the data were not normally distributed (Table 1).

Table 1. Changes in Adolescent Emotional Mental Disorders in Intervention Group 1 (Therapeutic Group Therapy and Cognitive Therapy) and Intervention Group 2 (Therapeutic Group Therapy) n = 60

Variable	Group	n	Pre-test	Post-test	Post-test 2	Post-test 3	Mean diff	SD Difference	p-value
Mental-emotional disorders	Intervention 1: TGT dan CT	30	13.33	12.17	8.47	7.80	5.53	2.870	0.000
	Intervention 2: TGT	30	14.43	12.97	1.03	13.23	1.20	3.497	0.095

Intervention group 1 received therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy. The average scores of emotional mental disorders of the adolescents are 13.33 (33.32%) before the therapeutic group therapy to 12.17 (30.42%) after the therapeutic group therapy, 8.47 (21.17%) after the therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy, and 7.80 (19.5%) after mentoring and independent training. It shows that adolescents still have normal range emotional mental disorders with a p-value of <0.05. This finding concludes that scores of emotional mental disorders in intervention group 1 significantly decrease.

Intervention group 2 who only receive therapeutic group therapy have a score of emotional-mental disorders from 14.43 (36.07%) before therapeutic group therapy to 12.97 (32.42%) after therapeutic group therapy, 13.03 (32.57%) after group therapy without cognitive therapy, and 13.23 (33.07%) after mentoring and independent training. This finding shows that adolescents' mental-emotional disorders are in the normal range with a p-value of >0.05. Moreover, this finding concludes scores of emotional mental disorders of intervention group 2 do not significantly decrease after therapeutic group therapy without cognitive therapy as well as mentoring with independent training.

Discussions

Adolescents have a normal category of emotional mental disorders (33.32%) before receiving therapeutic group therapy. This result is not much different from that of a previous study discovering that the average mental-emotional state of adolescents reaches 35.2% in the normal category (Malfasari et al., 2020). This study has revealed that some adolescents still experience mental-emotional disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic. They experience changes in their lives, such as conducting virtual school activities. Most of them feel stressed because they cannot meet their peers at school and have the workload of online schools. Previous research states that 40% of junior high school adolescents experience mental-emotional disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic (Suratmi et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic is a tough challenge for adolescents because it causes virtual school learning that forces them to adapt to a new culture and study at home without a teacher.

Virtual learning can also cause students to feel tired because the tasks given by the teacher are overloaded (Rahmi et al., 2020). If distance learning or virtual school due to the COVID-19 pandemic occurs over a long period, the students will suffer from psychological problems, such as experiencing anxiety, fear, excessive worry, stress, and depression (Mukti et al., 2020). These problems will finally affect adolescents' developmental tasks. Moreover, if they cannot fulfill these developmental tasks, their adulthood development can be at risk, and they can suffer from emotional mental disorders.

Symptoms of emotional mental disorders that are frequently experienced by adolescents are emotional symptoms. Emotional symptoms consist of frequently complaining body aches (such as headaches and stomach), showing a lot of worries, frequently not being happy, frequently crying, being nervous, easily losing confidence, and being easily scared (Direktur Jenderal Pencegahan Pengendalian Penyakit, 2021). These symptoms are supported by the adolescents during the research. They argue that online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic results in great concern because they do not understand the content of the material, drop grades, and could not meet their friends. Moreover, they experience insecurity or loss of confidence and obtain values that are not in line with their expectations. As a result, the emotional symptoms increase. Adolescents are very vulnerable to stressors during the sensitive period of development; thus, their mental health during and after the pandemic requires special consideration (Courtney et al., 2020). Moreover, promotive and preventive efforts are necessary to prevent and overcome emotional mental disorders in adolescents.

Adolescents received therapeutic group therapy in 6 meetings for 3 weeks, cognitive therapy in 4 meetings for 1.5 weeks, mentoring in 1 meeting for 4 days, and independent training for 6 days. These therapies have significantly decreased adolescents' emotional mental disorders by 19.5%. This result is supported by research discovering that TGT can improve emotional development of adolescents (Arifuddin & Pangaribuan, 2021). This result is also in line with the research by Maryatun & Ningsih (2019) who discover that therapeutic group therapy has increased adolescents' emotional development, such as increasing the ability to

adjust to new situations, starting to pay attention to others, and being able to control desires and anger. Adolescence is a period of an emotional peak with high emotional development; this period needs attention from the surrounding environment, such as parents, teachers, and health workers, as well as a good environment to enable adolescents to control their emotions (Fitri & Adelya, 2017). To achieve emotional maturity, adolescents must describe the situation that causes the emotional reaction and stimulate emotional aspects in session 3 can reduce emotional mental disorders.

After receiving therapeutic group therapy, the domain that most significantly decreases emotional mental disorders is behavioral problems. It happens because, during the process of therapeutic group therapy, adolescents learn together and practice stimulation to solve a problem. One of the goals of TGT is to encourage adolescents to form new behavior patterns to solve verbal and nonverbal problems within groups as well as verbal and nonverbal conflicts between groups (Sutejo & Sulistiyawati, 2020). Interaction in the group certainly provides strength and new behavior patterns for adolescents to become better.

Cognitive therapy is a therapy that provides a basis for adolescents to think, express their negative feelings, understand problems, and overcome their negative feelings and problems (Rahmayani & Syisnawati, 2018). Emotional disorders of adolescents decrease because, during therapy, they are trained to overcome negative thoughts about unpleasant experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and virtual school. These experiences often lead to self-labeling, which makes them feel insecure and do nothing. This is a negative automatic thought that frequently occurs in adolescents during virtual school and the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it can be concluded that cognitive therapy is the right choice given to adolescents to overcome negative thoughts about unpleasant experiences; thus, they can be motivated and have the confidence to fight against positive thoughts.

Independent exercise carried out regularly and continuously is an important point for the therapy and can form new habits or cultures for adolescents. Regular exercises and high motivation are also critical factors to succeed in therapy (Astuti et al., 2010). The success of a therapy depends on the motivation to implement the therapy; the higher motivation, the more effective the therapy. Finally, such a condition will trigger adolescents to repeat the therapy.

Emotional mental disorder scores decrease because, during the end of the therapy process, adolescents always reflect on the perceived benefits and are committed to implementing therapeutic group therapy

exercises and cognitive therapy in their daily activities planned in their respective workbooks. The process of reflection that is carried out after therapy enables the respondents in groups to express their feelings after following and learning this therapy (Kealy et al., 2017). This study has revealed that 19.5% of mental-emotional disorders have not been resolved so nursing actions are expected to continue. Previous research by Tian et al. (2021) proves that high parental involvement will reduce emotional mental disorders in adolescents. Based on this, the researcher assumes that additional family psychoeducation therapy is needed so that the score for emotional mental disorders in adolescents reaches 0%. Besides, it is necessary to continue to reflect and commit to therapy.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of adolescents and changed the learning method to the virtual school learning method. This type of learning has biological, psychological, and social impacts on adolescents and can make them at risk of experiencing mental-emotional disorders. Based on this, promotive and preventive efforts, namely adolescent therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy, are necessary. This study concludes that therapeutic group therapy and cognitive therapy can prevent emotional mental disorders in adolescents.

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Author Contributions

Several people contributed to the completion of this research. The primary author contributed the topic, principal ideas, and requisite materials, whereas the other authors were tasked with devising and structuring the research methodologies. All authors collectively assumed responsibility for data collection, tabulation and analysis, the review process, and paper composition.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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