



THE EFFECT OF PLANT THERAPY ON THE ELDERLY LONELINESS LEVEL AT THE WREDA HOUSE

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The elderly experience changes in physical, biological and psychological functions. This decreased function affects mobility and relationships with other people so that the elderly often experience loneliness, or alone. Efforts to overcome the problem of loneliness in the elderly require planting therapy with an emotional and psychological approach. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was an effect of planting therapy on the loneliness level of the elderly at the "Pucang Gading" Elderly Social Service Home.

Method: The method and design of this study used quantitative research with a quasi-experimental design and the type of research design used was one group pre-post test with 32 respondents. The sampling technique used purposive sampling. The measuring tool used is the UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3 in Javanese. Wilcoxon rank test statistical test with a significant level of p-value <0.05.

Result: Research results showed the effect of planting therapy on the loneliness level of the elderly with a p-value <0.000.

Conclusion: The conclusion of the study is that there is an effect of plant therapy on the loneliness level of the elderly at the Pucang Gading Elderly Social Service Home. For future research, it is hoped that this can become a reference material or library material related to planting therapy to overcome the level of loneliness in the elderly and future researchers can anticipate the weaknesses in this study, and are expected to be able to develop research by conducting planting therapy using other methods such as planting plants with hydroponics which simpler by utilizing existing land.

Keywords: *Planting therapy, level of loneliness, elderly*

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INTRODUCTION

Community nursing is a form of professional service based on nursing knowledge and tips aimed especially at vulnerable and high-risk groups to improve community health status by emphasizing efforts to improve health, prevent disease and not neglect curative and rehabilitative care. These vulnerable groups include the elderly, children, the poor, pregnant women and people with disabilities (Kholifa, 2016). One of the vulnerable groups mentioned above is the elderly, because they are elderly has the characteristics of changes in all aspects of life which include physiological, psychological, social and spiritual changes.

At this time the elderly will bring about a complete change in their physique related to the decreased ability of the body's tissues, especially in physiological functions in the musculoskeletal system and the neurological system (Novianti, 2018). The changes that occur in the elderly can affect the balance of the body. The ability to balance decreases with age due to changes in the central nervous system or neurological, sensory systems such as the visual, vestibular and proprioceptive systems and the musculoskeletal system (Musyaroh, 2019). The prevalence of the elderly in Central Java Province in 2020 is relatively high, namely around 4.4 million people or 12.15% of the total population of Central Java which reaches 36.52 million people. (BPS Central

Java, 2020). The elderly population (> 60 years) in the city of Semarang is 170 thousand people or 9.29% of the total population of the city of Semarang (Semarang City BPS, 2020).

The condition of the elderly experiences changes in physical, biological and psychological functions. Decreased biological and psychological functions will affect mobility and relationships with other people. This situation often causes parents to have difficulty feeling lonely, or alone (Septiningsih, 2016). Loneliness is a condition that triggers a response such as feeling distant from someone. Loneliness in the elderly where the elderly feel alone, feel isolated, feel that no one can help when needed and lack of time to relate to their environment (social environment) both within their families and around their homes. Loneliness makes the elderly feel unhappy, the mood is not cheerful, other people are limited to communicate or share experiences, which is thought to affect their zest for life and appetite (Padilla, 2013). The loneliness felt by the elderly is more related to the lack of relationships with other people, the lack or reduced activity of many people, whether with family, other people or co-workers, which is the cause of limited work relationships or retirement. (Suardiman, 2016).

Loneliness experienced by the elderly is also caused because the elderly themselves do not have a partner. Elderly who live alone either because of divorce or because their partner left them have a higher level of loneliness than the elderly who still live with their partner. Solitude is personal and reacts differently to different people. Solitude is usually accepted, but loneliness can be a deep sadness for some people. Loneliness occurs when clients experience separation from others and social turmoil. In general, loneliness is the most common problem among older people. Loneliness causes feelings of helplessness, lack of self-confidence, dependency, and abandonment. Those who stated loneliness tended to rate themselves as worthless, careless, and unloved. The feeling of loneliness is increasingly felt by the elderly who were previously active in various activities representing and dealing with many people (Amalia, 2016).

Efforts to overcome the problem of loneliness in the elderly require planting therapy with an emotional and psychological approach. Plant therapy is an excellent guide on how to deal with someone who is experiencing aversions and some disturbances in the environment that cause a person to experience health, mental, low self-esteem, calm mood and difficulty focusing. (Princess, 2013). Plant therapy is a form of active therapy which is an important part of treating lonely people so that they can improve their physical health, thinking and enthusiasm for living more comfortably. Gardening is a simple therapy, because it can encourage patients to interact with living things, namely plants that require care that is not discriminatory. (Silitonga, 2017).

This therapy is more likely to teach someone to care for plants or other living things that will familiarize the individual with the environment, from planting and caring for plants to when harvesting

Age	frequency	percent
60 - 69 Years	16	50%
70 - 74 years	16	50%
Total	32	100%

plants. The problem of loneliness in the elderly can use plant therapy, because this therapy affects a person's emotions and creates a sense of calm and a family atmosphere, so that the elderly feel happy and happy with the loneliness that is felt by the feelings of pleasure experienced by the elderly (Princess, 2013).

Based on the preliminary study that the researchers conducted at the Pucang Gading Elderly Social Service Home, there were 94 elderly people, 50 elderly people experiencing bed rest and 44 elderly people who could still carry out activities as usual and met the criteria of the researcher, so the researcher

Education	frequency	percent
Elementary school	21	65.6%
Equivalent High School	1	3.1%
No school	10	31.3%
Total	32	100%

could make these 44 people become respondents for implant therapy. In the preliminary study, the researchers distributed 10 questionnaires to the elderly, and the results showed that 6 out of 10 elderly people experienced moderate loneliness with a score of 41-60, 2 out of 10 elderly people experienced low loneliness with a score of 20-40, and 2 out of 10 elderly people did not experience loneliness. And from the observations that the researchers made, there was empty land in the courtyard of the Pucang Gading Elderly Social Service Home which was suitable for planting therapy.

METHOD

In this study, researchers used quasi-experimental research (quasi experiment). This study aims to find the effect of implant therapy to treat lonely elderly people at the Pucang Gading social service house in Semarang City. The sample size in this study were 32 elderly people. This study uses a purposive sampling technique, which is sampling by determining certain criteria that the researcher wants. The research was conducted at the Pucang Gading Elderly Social Service Home, Semarang City. The research was conducted from April 7 to May 14, 2022

RESULTS

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Age at Home Pucang Gading Elderly Social Services Semarang City (n = 32)

Age	f	%
60 - 69 Years	16	50%
70 - 74 years	16	50%
Total	32	100%

Based on table 1, the data shows that the frequency distribution of the age range of respondents at the age of 60-69 years is 16 respondents (50%) and the age range of 70-74 years is 16 respondents (50%)

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Education Levels at the Pucang Gading Elderly Social Service Center in Semarang City (n = 32)

Education	f	%
Elementary school	21	65.6%
Equivalent High School	1	3.1%
No school	10	31.3%
Total	32	100%

Based on table 2, the data shows that the distribution of the frequency of education of the respondents, namely elementary school totaling 21 people (65.5%), not attending school totaling 10 people (31.3%), high school equivalent amounting to 1 person (3.1%).

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Gender at the Pucang Gading Elderly Social Service Center in Semarang City (n = 32)

Gender	f	%
Man	9	28.1%
Woman	23	71.9%
Total	32	100%

Based on table 3, the data shows that the frequency distribution of the sex of the respondents is 23 women (71.9%) and 9 men (28.1%).

Table 4
Frequency Distribution Based on Respondents' Level of Loneliness Before Treatment (n = 32)

Respondent's Loneliness Level	frequency	percent
Not Lonely	0	0%
Low Loneliness	5	15.6%
Moderate Loneliness	23	71.9%
Heavy Loneliness	4	12.5%
Total	32	100%

Based on table 4, it shows that the loneliness level of the elderly before planting therapy was mostly in the category of moderate loneliness with a total of 23 people with a percentage of 71.9%, a low level of loneliness with a total of 5 people with a percentage

of 15.6%, severe loneliness with a total of 4 people with percentage of 12.5% and 0 people who do not experience loneliness.

Table 5
Frequency Distribution Based on Respondents' Level of Loneliness After Planting Therapy (n = 32)

Elderly Loneliness Level	frequency	percent
Not Lonely	25	78.1%
Low Loneliness	7	21.9%
Moderate Loneliness	0	0%
Heavy Loneliness	0	0%
Total	32	100%

Based on table 5, it shows that the loneliness level of the elderly after planting therapy with the majority in the not lonely category with a total of 25 people with a percentage of 78.1%, low loneliness with a total of 7 people with a percentage of 21.9% and no one experienced moderate and severe loneliness .

Table 6
Loneliness Level Before and After Given Planting Therapy

Analysis of the Effect of Loneliness on Planting Therapy	Means	std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)	P-value
Elderly Loneliness Pre Test - Elderly Loneliness Post Test	1,750	0.672	0.000	0.005

Based on table 6, the Wilcoxon rank test shows data that the effect of planting therapy on the loneliness level of the elderly is sig. (2-tailed) 0.000. This means that pvalue <0.005 so that Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is an effect of planting therapy on the loneliness level of the elderly at the Pucang Gading Elderly Social Service Home in Semarang City.

DISCUSSION

Increasing human age causes a degenerative aging process which will have an impact on physical changes, as well as cognitive, emotional, social and sexual changes. Many changes cause biological and psychological functions to decrease so that it will affect mobility and relationships with other people. Thus causing the elderly to experience difficulties and feel lonely, or alone (Septiningsih, 2016).

Social interaction is a process in which humans communicate and influence each other in actions and thoughts. The decline in health status and physical abilities causes the elderly to slowly avoid relationships with other people. This will result in decreased social interaction. Elderly (elderly) who

have good adjustment, such as being able to interact socially with neighbors and the surrounding community and participate in activities in the area where the elderly are located, then the reciprocity of social support itself will also be good and affect the life of the elderly both present and future life as well as if the elderly (elderly) who have less interaction characters will affect their lives as they will feel hopeless,

Elementary school education is the most dominant in this study which causes many elderly people to experience loneliness, because educational factors greatly affect cognitive function in the elderly which is useful in dealing with all problems. The low educational status of respondents (Elementary School) is caused by the fact that in the past it was still difficult to access education itself, causing a mindset and ways of solving problems that were less than optimal so that the elderly often experienced loneliness. The higher a person's level of education, the more life experiences he will go through so that he will be better prepared to face problems that occur (Sutinah, 2017). Education can affect a person's behavior. The higher a person's education, the more easily he will receive information so that the more knowledge he has. In addition, education is also an initial capital in cognitive development, where cognitive can be a mediator between an event and mood, so that a lack of education can be a risk factor for the elderly to suffer from loneliness (Sutinah, 2017)

Women have a higher level of loneliness than men. This is because when a woman is still with her partner, she does activities together because the presence of a partner is very important for women. When there is no longer a partner, women will need someone else to share their thoughts and feelings. In contrast to men, when they lose their partner, their emotional condition is not too different from usual because men's characteristics are stronger and more introverted. (Wulandari A., 2020).

Loneliness is a mental and emotional state resulting from a lack of existing social relationships, causing feelings of alienation and dissatisfaction with existing social relationships. Lonely people tend to be unhappy and dissatisfied with themselves, are unwilling to hear intimate disclosures from others and tend to open themselves up either too little or too much, feel hopeless, and often feel hopeless. (Inna, 2020).

Interacting socially in groups helps patients better. Psychological development including increased self-esteem and self-confidence. Working with plants makes the patient feel a sense of responsibility. Knowing they are responsible for nurturing and caring for living plants makes patients feel more productive and feel motivated. Patients feel calm and become more open to talk about their problems (Mardiyati, 2016).

Gardening activities help individuals feel more positive emotions and moods after doing these activities. The individual feels calmer, the level of

stress experienced is less than before applying the therapy. Besides being able to reduce stress or depression levels in individuals, this therapy is also often applied to the elderly and individuals with cases of low self-esteem, by planting plants, it makes individuals feel a sense of responsibility and can increase self-esteem and become more confident. Knowing they are responsible for nurturing and caring for living plants makes individuals feel more productive and feel motivated. Thus making individuals feel calm and become more open (Effendi, 2021).

Health problems in the elderly often occur due to various declines in bodily and psychological functions. Not only that, geriatric syndrome can also occur due to socio-economic problems to drastic changes in the surrounding environment. There are several factors that greatly influence the mental health of the elderly. These factors should be addressed wisely so that the elderly can enjoy their old age happily. There are several factors faced by the elderly that greatly affect their mental health. decreased physical condition, decreased sexual function and potency, changes in psychosocial aspects, changes related to work and changes in social roles in society (Kartinah, 2020).

After people enter old age, they generally begin to be plagued by multiple pathological physical conditions (multiple pathologies), for example reduced energy, decreased energy, increasingly wrinkled skin, increasingly falling teeth, more brittle bones, etc. In general, the physical condition of a person who has entered old age has decreased manifold (Kartiningrum, 2017). All of these can cause disturbances or abnormalities in physical, psychological and social functioning, which in turn can lead to a state of dependence on other people. In the life of the elderly in order to maintain a healthy physical condition, it is necessary to align physical needs with psychological and social conditions, so inevitably there must be efforts to reduce activities that are physically forcing. An elderly person must be able to manage his way of life properly, for example eating, sleeping, resting and working in a balanced way. There is a decrease in the physical and psychological functions of the elderly that must be treated, one of which is by getting plant therapy (Haruna, 2014).

After conducting an analysis using SPSS, it was found that the elderly experienced a change in quality of life, from the lonely level category to the non-lonely level category. The results of the Wilcoxon signed rank test show data that the effect of planting therapy on the loneliness level of the elderly with a sig. (2-tailed) 0.000. This means that $p < 0.005$ so that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected.

Plant therapy is one of the environmental therapies that can improve the health of the body, mind and spirit as well as quality of life. The purpose of this activity is to increase the knowledge and quality of life of patients, especially elderly patients who experience loneliness because self-planting

therapy aims to teach the elderly to care for everything/living things, and to help close relationships between one person and another. This activity uses plants or plants as objects in achieving therapeutic goals. Planting plants from seeds to flowers or fruit and the elderly are allowed to pick them (Mardiyati, 2016).

Planting Therapy is an important therapy for dealing with problems with mood disorders such as depression. Depression is a form of disturbance in the natural feelings (affective, mood) characterized by moodiness, sadness, lethargy, loss of passion for life, no enthusiasm, and feeling helpless, feelings of guilt or guilt, uselessness and hopelessness, giving rise to feelings/ideas. suicide (suicide) or suicidal behavior, as many as 40% of people with depression have the idea to commit suicide, and only about 15% are successful in doing so (Mardiyati, 2016). This is in line with research conducted by Taesar Hawaj et al (2021) with the title of research on melansia: empowering anti-stress elderly people in nursing homes using the herbal gardening method states that Melansia is a solution in training the elderly to anti-stress during a pandemic through herbal gardening activities which are proven to reduce stress and loneliness levels in the elderly, and can increase the level of spiritual well-being and physical activity of the elderly. (Hawaj, 2021).

Planting therapy or gardening is not only a fun relaxing activity, however, gardening can also have an impact on body health. Tarapi tamam has many health benefits for both adults and especially for the elderly. Planting therapy can increase happy hormones in the elderly. The Indonesian Ministry of Health states that they do regular exercise, get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet and apply clean and healthy living behaviors and develop interests, such as by doing gardening activities. Gardening can be a means of exercising so that the levels of the hormones dopamine and serotonin in the body will increase and cortisol or the stress hormone will decrease. The hormones dopamine and serotonin, both of which are also called the happiness hormones because they can make you feel better and reduce fresh stress levels (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Planting has 4 benefits, namely cognitive, social, psychological and physical development. The cognitive advantage is learning new skills and languages. Through gardening therapy, patients can improve their ability to make decisions and solve problems, as well as their ability to learn complex instructions. Patients are able to work independently so they can increase their awareness of the environment around them. Gardening therapy makes patients work in groups by sharing, interacting and compromising to work together to achieve goals. Interacting socially in groups helps patients better. Psychological development including increased self-esteem and self-confidence. Working with plants makes the patient feel a sense of responsibility. Knowing they are responsible for nurturing and caring for living plants makes patients feel more

productive and feel motivated. Patients feel calm and become more open to talk about their problems. Physical improvement occurs because the patient works in the fresh air, moves the body and adapts to physical and environmental changes. Gardening therapy can train muscles by stimulating gross and fine motor development to help patients gain a sense of color, texture, shape and smell. (Mardiyati, 2016)

CONCLUSION

Age characteristics in this study mean value of 68.84. The majority of respondents' education, namely elementary school, amounted to 21 people (65.5%) and the majority of respondents were female, totaling 23 people (71.9%). The level of loneliness of the elderly before planting therapy with the majority in the category of moderate loneliness with a total of 23 people with a percentage of 71.9%. The level of lonely elderly after planting therapy with the majority in the not lonely category with a total of 25 people with a percentage of 78.1%. There is an effect of the level of loneliness of the elderly on planting therapy with a sig. (2-tailed) 0.000. This means that pvalue <0.005 so that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is an effect of planting therapy on the level of loneliness of the elderly at home.

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