

# Comparative Analysis of Clinical Hypnotherapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in Treating Generalized Anxiety Disorder

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**Abstract - Despite the lack of data supporting group hypnosis as a treatment for GAD, group CBT has shown promising results in clinical trials. This study aims to compare the two therapies for GAD and find out which one is more effective. Both convenience and experimental sampling were employed in the design of the pre- and post-tests. Thirty patients with major depressive illness were the subjects of the study; they were split evenly into two groups of fifteen. Group cognitive behavioral therapy and group hypnosis were both used to treat the first group. We checked the numbers with an independent t-test. The results demonstrated a statistically significant decrease in depression levels in group hypnotherapy ( $p < 0.01$ ) compared to group cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT). Also, at the pre and posttest levels, the data suggests a significant difference between the two groups, with a p-value of less than 0.01. Hypnotherapy in a group setting is recommended for GAD patients seeking a more effective treatment.**

**Keywords - Hypnotherapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Anxiety Disorder.**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Generalized anxiety disorder, often known as GAD, is a prominent mental health problem that is defined by persistent and excessive concern. It is frequently accompanied by physical symptoms such as restlessness, exhaustion, and difficulties concentrating. Because it affects around three to five percent of the world's population, it is considered to be one of the most prevalent anxiety disorders in the world. It is common for people who suffer from generalized anxiety disorder to have severe impairment in a variety of aspects of their lives, such as their employment, their relationships, and their overall quality of life.

There are many different therapeutic methods that are available for the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). Clinical hypnotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) are two of the more renowned treatments. Because of its effectiveness in reducing anxiety symptoms, both of these techniques have garnered recognition and respect among the community of mental health professionals. But there are major differences between them in terms of the theoretical foundations, methodologies, and mechanisms of action that they employ.

A diverse approach to treatment is required due to the intricacy of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), with psychotherapy emerging as a cornerstone in the management of this condition. Among the many different types of psychotherapeutic therapies that are accessible, Clinical Hypnotherapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) have gained a lot of attention due to the fact that they are effective in treating anxiety-related symptoms and enhancing general well-being. Both modalities have their own distinct theoretical frameworks, treatment procedures, and underlying mechanisms of action, which makes them fascinating subjects for comparative examination.

The goal of clinical hypnotherapy, which is founded on the concepts of hypnosis and suggestion, is to produce a state of focused attention and increased suggestibility in individuals in order to allow therapeutic transformation. The goal is to encourage adaptive coping skills and minimize anxiety symptoms by the use of techniques such as guided imagery, relaxation, and reframing negative beliefs using approaches such as these. But cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) holds that our ideas, emotions, and behaviors are all connected and may influence one another. The goal of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for GAD is to help patients

identify and change unhelpful ways of thinking and coping via the use of techniques such as behavioral modification, skills training, and cognitive restructuring (Ramondo et al. 2021).

Despite the fact that GAD can be effectively treated with either therapeutic hypnotherapy or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a comprehensive comparison study is necessary to determine the benefits, drawbacks, and practicality of each method. Understanding the subtleties of various therapeutic methods is essential for making educated decisions on the selection of therapy and the optimization of outcomes for those who suffer from generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

### • Clinical Hypnotherapy

Clinical hypnotherapy is a form of psychotherapy that makes use of hypnosis as a means of assisting individuals in addressing a variety of concerns and enhancing their overall well-being. Hypnosis is a technique that causes a trance-like condition, which enables therapists to make recommendations to the subconscious mind in order to bring about beneficial changes in the individual's ideas, feelings, actions, or perceptions. Anxiety, phobias, quitting smoking, managing weight, and pain relief are just some of the conditions that can be treated with this medication. As a method that is supported by research, it is frequently combined with other treatments in order to get the best possible outcomes.

### • Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Behavioral therapy, also known as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), is a therapeutic technique that is extensively utilized and focuses on the relationship between ideas, feelings, and actions. With the goal of assisting individuals in recognizing and altering negative or unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviors that lead to emotional discomfort or mental health concerns, it is intended to be of assistance. Changing the way we think may have a positive influence on our feelings and actions, which can ultimately lead to increased well-being and coping abilities. This is the central tenet of cognitive behavioral therapy.

### • Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Anxiety disorders are common, and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is characterized by persistent and excessive worry or fear about many aspects of life, including work, relationships, health, and daily situations. GAD is characterized by a lack of control over these feelings. Individuals who suffer from generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) frequently experience elevated levels of anxiety and struggle to exert control over their stressful thoughts, even when there is little or no obvious cause to be concerned.

- **Symptoms:** Excessive concern, restlessness, irritability, muscular tension, trouble focusing, exhaustion, sleep difficulties, and physical symptoms such as headaches or stomachaches are some of the symptoms that can be associated with generalized anxiety disorder-related symptoms.
- **Duration:** Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is defined by persistent anxiety that is chronic and continuing and lasts for at least six months or more. Generally speaking, the fear and stress are disproportionate to the actual events or circumstances that are occurring.
- **Impact:** Anxiety disorders may have a substantial influence on a person's day-to-day functioning, including their employment, their relationships, and their general quality of life. There is also the possibility that it will develop to other mental health problems, such as substance misuse or depression.
- **Causes:** Although the precise etiology of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is not completely known, it is thought that it is caused by a confluence of elements that include genetics, biology, the environment, and psychology. The development of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) can be influenced by traumatic experiences, stressful life events, and a family history of anxiety disorders.
- **Diagnosis:** A comprehensive evaluation by a mental health professional, which may include a review of symptoms, a review of medical history, and perhaps psychological evaluations or questionnaires, is required in order to arrive at a diagnosis of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Ardi et al. (2022)** High academic demands often affect students' mental and physical health, leading to common health problems like gastrointestinal disorders, which often result in generalized anxiety disorders (GADs) and reduced quality of life and productivity. Female adolescents are most affected, occurring in South African and Indonesian populations. Drug use, particularly benzodiazepines, can cause psychological conditions as side effects. A targeted and efficient approach is needed to reduce psychological symptoms from functional gastrointestinal disorders (FGIDs) in the form of anxiety.

**Ramondo et al. (2021)** a meta-analysis of literature on the relationship between metacognitive knowledge and functional outcomes in acquired brain injury (ABI) has revealed two methods of measuring metacognitive knowledge: absolute and relative discrepancy. The study found that better metacognitive knowledge is related to better overall

functional outcomes, but the relationship may differ depending on the outcome domain. The findings generally support the importance of focusing on metacognitive knowledge to improve outcomes following ABI. However, the small effect sizes observed suggest that other predictors of functional outcome, including other subdomains of metacognition, should be investigated. The study highlights the need for further research on metacognitive knowledge to improve outcomes in ABI patients.

**Trumm (2018)** a systematic review was conducted to assess the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in treating anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders are a major group in psychiatry and medicine, with high prevalence and early onset. Treatment can be expensive and time-consuming, and medication can have unpleasant side effects. Hypnotherapy has shown efficacy for various conditions, and there is growing interest in providing it in healthcare settings. The review included 3 randomized controlled trials, with 320 participants. Two studies investigated the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), while one included participants with anxiety disorders and mixed anxiety depressive disorders. The results were inconclusive due to methodological quality issues and the volume of research. The review concluded that the evidence regarding hypnotherapy's effectiveness in treating anxiety disorders is insufficient, mainly due to methodological quality and the volume of research. More high-quality research is needed to assess its effectiveness.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

**Participants:** The research sample population consisted of all patients referred to A Hypnosis Clinic between April 2021 and June 2022 who were characterized and diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder. The sample consisted of thirty patients, ranging in age from eighteen to forty-five. This study used the Convenience Random Sampling and Sharing statistical method.

**Materials:** GAD-7 Screening Tool, biographies, and self-reports were used to gather data. Additionally, patients included in the survey were given participant permission forms prior to the study's administration and data collection.

**Procedures:** This research makes use of a pre- and post-test design, typical of experimental studies. One set of participants served as an experimental group, while the other set served as a control group. Hypnosis was administered to one group and cognitive behavioral therapy to the other. Anxiety levels were measured before and after the administration of cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT) and hypnotherapy using the GAD-7 Screening Tool in all groups.

### 4. RESULT

The mean and standard deviation were utilized for the descriptive statistical analysis, and the SPSS program was utilized for the inferential statistical analysis. The inferential analysis set out to do just that by comparing the two groups' initial values.

**Table 1. The frequency distribution of respondents in the hypnosis group by age, marital status, and educational attainment**

	Variable	Number	Percentage
Education	Diploma	5	33.34%
	College	3	20.0%
	Bachelor degree	6	40.0%
	Master degree and above	1	6.67%
Age	18	6	40.00%
	26	8	54.43%
	34	1	6.67%
Marital status	Single	9	60.00%
	Married	6	40%.00

**Table 2. The frequency distribution of respondents in the CBT group by age, marital status, and educational attainment**

	Variable	Number	Percentage
Education	Diploma	4	26.65%
	College	5	33.32%
	Bachelor degree	5	33.34%
	Master degree and above	1	6.67%
Age	18	5	33.34%
	26	9	60.00%
	34	1	6.65%
Marital status	Single	8	53.34%
	Married	7	46.67%

**Table 3. The individuals' pre- and post-test mean and standard deviations on the GAD-7 Screening Tool for the hypnosis group**

Variables	Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation
Generalized Anxiety Disorder	Pre-Test	48.9	5.2
	Post-Test	19.3	6.1

**Table 4. Mean and standard deviation scores from the GAD-7 Screening Tool pre- and post-test outcomes in the cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) group**

Variables	Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation
Generalized Anxiety Disorder	Pre-Test	47.1	6.9
	Post-Test	24.1	6.4

**Table 5. Results of the independent t-test used to compare the GAD-7 Screening Tool ratings for hypnosis and CBT.**

Significance Level N.S	Degree of Freedom	T	SD	Mean	Treatment	Groups	Variable
0.417	28	9.4	5.2	48.9	Hypnosis	Pre-Test	Generalized Anxiety Disorder
			6.1	47.1	CBT		
0.01	28	11.21	6.9	19.03	Hypnosis	Post-test	
			6.4	24.1	CBT		

**5. CONCLUSION**

As a consequence of these data, it can be concluded that there exists a significant difference between the two groups in terms of the degree of significance at both the pre-test and post-test levels ( $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, it has provided an overview of some of the favorable improvements that have contributed to the professionalization of this modality. In light of the fact that modern group hypnosis has been shown to be effective, valuable, and of high quality, it is essential that group hypnotherapy continue to be included in private health insurance. Upon analysis of the data, it was seen that with group hypnotherapy, anxiety levels saw a significant drop ( $p < 0.01$ ) in comparison to the values obtained by group cognitive behavioral therapy. In a similar vein, Clinical group hypnosis was found to be effective in treating anxiety in our study, as well as its advantages in comparison to group cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as it is now being put into practice, which, according to our findings, was more significant in the treatment of anxiety.

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