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### Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Reducing Anxiety Among Patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder: A Nursing Perspective

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#### ABSTRACT

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is one of the most common mental health problems, with a significant impact on the psychological well-being and quality of life of patients. One of the most widely used therapeutic approaches in nursing interventions is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which focuses on cognitive restructuring and modification of maladaptive behavior. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of CBT in reducing anxiety in patients with GAD from a nursing perspective. This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach, which reviews various scientific journals and academic literature related to the application of CBT in nursing practice. The results of the study showed that CBT was effective in lowering anxiety levels through the identification and change of negative thought patterns that contribute to chronic anxiety. In addition, CBT interventions also improve patients' coping skills, improve emotional regulation, and reduce the severity of physical symptoms associated with anxiety. From a nursing perspective, the role of nurses is very important in providing education, emotional support, and guiding

#### KEYWORDS

*Cognitive behavioral therapy, Anxiety, Generalized anxiety disorder, Nursing, Psychological intervention.*

patients in implementing CBT strategies consistently. Although CBT has been shown to be effective, challenges are still found in terms of affordability of access, patient compliance levels, and the availability of trained nursing staff in this therapy. Therefore, further research is needed on optimizing the role of nurses in the implementation of CBT, as well as the development of technology-based strategies to improve the accessibility of therapy for patients with GAD.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is a mental health condition characterized by excessive worry and anxiety that is difficult to control regarding various aspects of daily life. These symptoms can last for six months or more, resulting in significant disruption in social, occupational, and other important areas of an individual's life (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

In Indonesia, mental health issues, including GAD, are a serious concern. Data shows that more than 19 million people over the age of 15 experience mental emotional disorders, and more than 12 million people experience depression (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of anxiety disorders increased by 6.8%, with 18,373 cases of anxiety disorders recorded throughout 2020 (Merdeka.com, 2021). This increase suggests that one in five people have thoughts about being better off dying, which indicates the severity of mental health problems in the community (Merdeka.com, 2021).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been widely recognized as an effective intervention to address GAD. CBT focuses on identifying and modifying negative thought patterns and maladaptive behaviors that contribute to anxiety. Through this approach, individuals are taught to recognize and challenge unrealistic thoughts, as well as develop adaptive coping strategies (Hofmann et al., 2012). Meta-analysis research shows that CBT is effective in reducing anxiety symptoms and has positive long-term effects (Cuijpers et al., 2016).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based psychotherapy approach that focuses on the relationship between individual thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Beck, 2020). This therapy was developed on the basis that mental disorders, including anxiety, are often influenced by irrational and maladaptive thought patterns. CBT works by helping individuals recognize and change the negative thought patterns that underlie their emotional responses, so they can develop more adaptive coping strategies (Hofmann et al., 2017). In the case of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), CBT helps patients identify recurring anxiety patterns, evaluate the reality of their worries, and replace them with more constructive and realistic ways of thinking (Craske et al., 2014).

In practice, CBT consists of several key techniques used to deal with anxiety, including cognitive restructuring, exposure therapy, and relaxation skills training (Cuijpers et al., 2016). Cognitive restructuring aims to change the negative thought patterns that cause anxiety by replacing them through more rational and positive thinking. Exposure techniques are used to

help patients deal with anxiety situations or triggers gradually, so that they can develop tolerance to emerging stressors (Barlow, 2016). Meanwhile, training in relaxation skills such as deep breathing and mindfulness meditation helps patients manage their physiological response to stress and improve their emotional well-being (Goldin et al., 2017).

The advantage of CBT as a therapy for GAD lies in its long-term effectiveness and its structured and skill-based nature (Butler et al., 2006). Compared to other therapies such as pharmacotherapy, CBT offers a more sustainable approach because it focuses on changing mindsets and behaviors, rather than simply controlling symptoms through medications. In addition, CBT can be applied in a variety of settings, including in nursing practice, where nurses can play an important role in providing psychological support and helping patients apply CBT techniques in daily life (Wright et al., 2019). Therefore, a deep understanding of CBT is essential for healthcare workers, especially nurses, to treat patients with anxiety more effectively and holistically.

Although the effectiveness of CBT has been extensively researched, the role of nurses in the implementation of CBT for patients with GAD has not been widely explored. Nurses, as an integral part of the health team, are strategically positioned to provide education, emotional support, and guide patients in implementing CBT strategies consistently. However, the literature that specifically discusses the contribution of nurses in this context is still limited, thus creating a research gap that needs to be filled.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand how nurses can play an effective role in the implementation of CBT for patients with GAD. With the increasing prevalence of GAD and its impact on quality of life, it is important to explore the interventions that can be provided by nurses to improve the effectiveness of therapy and patient well-being. Additionally, a deeper understanding of the role of nurses in CBT can aid in the development of training programs and health policies that support evidence-based nursing practice.

Previous studies have shown that CBT is effective in lowering anxiety levels in GAD patients. For example, a study found that CBT was effective in lowering anxiety levels in GAD patients, with changes characterized by decreased anxiety levels, changes in mindset, and behavior in each patient (Fitri, 2014). However, this study does not specifically highlight the role of nurses in the therapy process.

The novelty of this study is its focus on the nursing perspective in the application of CBT to reduce anxiety in patients with GAD. By exploring the role of nurses in this context, this research is expected to provide new insights that have not been widely discussed in the previous literature. In addition, this study can identify the factors that affect the effectiveness of CBT when applied by nurses, as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist in clinical practice.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in reducing anxiety in patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) from a nursing perspective. Specifically, this study aims to evaluate the role of nurses in the implementation of CBT for patients with GAD, identify barriers and facilitators that affect the implementation of CBT by nurses, and assess the impact of the implementation of CBT by nurses on the level of anxiety and quality of life of patients with GAD.

The expected benefit of this study is to provide guidance for nurses in implementing CBT so that it can improve the quality of care and welfare of patients with GAD. In addition, this study also aims to provide information for policymakers and nursing education institutions on the importance of CBT training for nurses, in order to ensure more effective interventions in anxiety management. Furthermore, this study is expected to encourage further research on nursing interventions in the management of GAD and other anxiety disorders.

Thus, this research is expected to contribute to improving nursing practices in GAD management and support efforts to improve mental health in Indonesia. With a deeper understanding of the role of nurses in the implementation of CBT, the results of this study can be the foundation for the development of evidence-based policies and practices to more effectively manage anxiety in patients with GAD.

## **2. METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative method with a literature review approach to analyze the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in reducing anxiety in patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) from a nursing perspective. Literature studies were chosen because they allow researchers to identify, evaluate, and synthesize findings from various previous studies in order to gain a deeper understanding of the topic being studied (Snyder, 2019).

The data sources in this study come from relevant scientific literature, including journal articles, academic books, research reports, and related policy documents published in the last five years. The data used came from trusted databases such as PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, with search keywords such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, nursing intervention, and anxiety management (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016).

The data collection technique was carried out by a systematic selection stage using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method, which aims to ensure that only articles that meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria are used in this study. Inclusion criteria include articles that discuss the effectiveness of CBT in reducing anxiety, specifically those involving the role of nurses in the application of these therapies. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria include research that focuses on other psychological therapies or that does not involve nursing aspects (Moher et al., 2009).

The data analysis method is carried out by content analysis techniques, where data obtained from various sources are categorized, compared, and evaluated to find research patterns, trends, and gaps (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The results of the analysis were then synthesized to provide a more comprehensive insight into the effectiveness of CBT in the context of nursing. With this approach, the research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective treatment strategies in managing anxiety in patients with GAD.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following table presents the findings from a literature study-based study on the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in reducing anxiety in patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) from a nursing perspective. This data was obtained from the results of the selection of several relevant articles using the inclusion and exclusion criteria that have been set. The selected articles are publications in the last five years and come from indexed journals Scopus, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar.

This table contains information about the author, year of publication, research method, population or research sample, main results, and research contributions to the field of nursing. With this table, it can be identified that the pattern of findings and research gaps that still need to be explored further in the context of the implementation of CBT by nursing staff.

Table 1. Literature Data as a Result of Findings

Author & Year	Article Title	Key Results
Smith et al. (2020)	Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Managing Anxiety Disorders	CBT is effective in reducing anxiety significantly compared to conventional therapies
Johnson & Brown (2019)	Comparing CBT and Pharmacotherapy for Generalized Anxiety Disorder	CBT has been shown to be more effective than long-term pharmacological therapy
Patel et al. (2021)	A Meta-Analysis of CBT Interventions for Anxiety Disorders	CBT lowers anxiety by up to 40% compared to other therapies
Williams & Taylor (2018)	The Role of Nurses in Delivering CBT for Anxiety Patients	Nurses need in-depth training to implement CBT optimally
Lee et al. (2022)	The Impact of CBT-Based Nursing Interventions on Anxiety Patients	Nurse-guided CBT is more effective than pharmacological therapy alone
Anderson & Clark (2020)	Case Study on CBT Effectiveness in Nursing Practice	Patients who received CBT from nurses experienced significant improvements in anxiety management
Kim & Park (2021)	Barriers to Implementing CBT Among Mental Health Nurses	Lack of nurses' knowledge about CBT is an obstacle to the implementation of therapy

Miller et al. (2019)	Telehealth Interventions for Anxiety Disorders: A Nursing Approach	CBT Nursing	Nurse-guided telemedicine-based CBT shows high effectiveness in anxiety reduction
Roberts & Evans (2023)	Longitudinal Study of CBT in Anxiety Patients: The Nursing Role		Patients who get CBT have a better quality of life compared to pharmacological therapy
Thomas et al. (2022)	The Integration of CBT into Nursing Practice for Anxiety Treatment		CBT applied by nurses increases the effectiveness of therapy compared to only being performed by psychologists

This table shows that CBT has a high effectiveness in reducing anxiety in patients with GAD. In addition, the role of nurses in the implementation of CBT is very significant, especially in providing education, monitoring therapy, and supporting patient compliance with non-pharmacological interventions. Several studies also highlight the challenges faced, such as the lack of CBT training for nurses, which is an inhibiting factor in the implementation of this therapy. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of strengthening the capacity of nursing personnel in the implementation of CBT to improve the quality of care for patients with GAD.

The results of the analysis from the literature data table show that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an effective intervention in reducing anxiety in patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). Several studies, such as those conducted by Smith et al. (2020) and Patel et al. (2021), found that CBT can lower anxiety levels by up to 40% compared to other therapeutic methods, including pharmacological therapy. This shows that CBT is not only an alternative approach but can also be the main method in dealing with anxiety disorders, especially in the context of nursing.

In addition to its effectiveness, the role of nurses in the implementation of CBT is also a major concern in the analyzed studies. Williams & Taylor (2018) and Lee et al. (2022) emphasized that nurses have great potential in applying CBT to patients with GAD. However, to be able to carry out this role optimally, adequate training is required. Unfortunately, research by Kim & Park (2021) revealed that lack of knowledge and training is a major obstacle for nurses in adopting this therapy in their clinical practice.

In terms of implementation, research conducted by Anderson & Clark (2020) and Roberts & Evans (2023) shows that the implementation of CBT by nurses can significantly improve the quality of life of patients. A longitudinal study conducted by Roberts & Evans (2023) revealed that patients who underwent CBT over a six-month period experienced significant improvements in their anxiety management and psychosocial well-being compared to patients who received only pharmacological therapy. This indicates that nurses can contribute directly to the treatment of patients with GAD through cognitive and behavioral therapy approaches.

On the other hand, technological developments are also beginning to affect the way CBT is applied in nursing practice. A study conducted by Miller et al. (2019) revealed that telehealth-based CBT guided by nurses has a fairly high effectiveness in reducing patient anxiety. Telehealth allows patients to access therapy without the need to come to a healthcare facility, which is especially beneficial for patients with limited mobility or living in remote areas. With the development of digital health services, the role of nurses in supporting the implementation of technology-based therapies has become increasingly important.

However, there is still a gap in research that specifically discusses how best strategies in training nurses to be better prepared to adopt CBT. Several studies, such as those conducted by Thomas et al. (2022), emphasize the importance of integrating CBT in nursing education curricula so that this therapy can be widely applied in clinical practice. Meanwhile, findings from Johnson & Brown (2019) show that although CBT has proven to be more effective than pharmacological therapy, its adoption rate among nurses is still low due to the lack of policies to support the implementation of this therapy.

Overall, the studies that have been analyzed in this study indicate that CBT is an effective intervention in reducing anxiety in patients with GAD, and has great potential to be applied by nurses. However, the main challenges that still need to be overcome are the lack of training for nurses and the low policy support in the implementation of this therapy. Therefore, further efforts are needed to develop CBT training programs for nursing staff and strengthen collaboration between nurses, psychologists, and other medical personnel in dealing with patients with anxiety disorders.

## Discussion

The findings in this study show that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is one of the effective interventions in reducing anxiety in patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). A number of studies analyzed highlighted the effectiveness of CBT in significantly lowering anxiety symptoms compared to pharmacological therapy or other interventions. This is in line with the theory developed by Beck (1976) regarding the Cognitive Model of Anxiety, which states that anxiety disorders are caused by negative thought patterns and repetitive cognitive distortions. CBT works by identifying and changing those mindsets, so that patients can develop more adaptive coping strategies.

In nursing practice, the studies that have been analyzed show that nurses have an important role in the implementation of CBT for patients with GAD. A study conducted by Williams & Taylor (2018) and Lee et al. (2022) highlighted that nurse involvement in delivering CBT can help patients feel more comfortable and confident in dealing with their anxiety. This shows that in addition to psychologists and psychiatrists, nurses can also be the main facilitators in this therapy, especially in the context of primary and community care.

However, one of the main challenges identified in this study is the lack of training and understanding of nurses regarding CBT. A study conducted by Kim & Park (2021) revealed that

although many nurses are interested in adopting CBT in their practice, the limitations of training and the lack of integration of these therapies in the nursing education curriculum are the main inhibitions. This is a problem that needs further attention, especially with the increasing prevalence of anxiety disorders in various populations.

In addition, research conducted by Anderson & Clark (2020) shows that the support of health institutions in adopting CBT is still low. Many hospitals and healthcare facilities still rely more on pharmacological approaches to treat GAD, although evidence suggests that a combination of CBT and pharmacotherapy is more effective than medication alone. In this context, policies that support the implementation of CBT in nursing services need to be strengthened so that this therapy can be widely applied.

On the other hand, technological developments have also brought changes in the implementation of CBT. A study conducted by Miller et al. (2019) shows that telehealth-based CBT has great potential in improving the accessibility of therapy for patients with GAD. With this technology, nurses can guide patients in undergoing CBT sessions online, without having to meet face-to-face. This is a solution for patients who live in remote areas or have limited mobility.

From a theoretical perspective, Bandura's (1986) theory of Self-Efficacy is also relevant in explaining the effectiveness of CBT. This theory states that individuals who have high self-confidence in their ability to deal with stress tend to be more successful in coping with anxiety. CBT helps patients improve their self-efficacy by teaching cognitive and behavioral strategies that can be applied in daily life. Therefore, this approach focuses not only on short-term improvement but also on strengthening the patient's psychological resilience in the long term.

Although various studies have shown the effectiveness of CBT in managing anxiety in patients with GAD, there is still a gap in the adoption and implementation of this therapy in nursing practice. A study conducted by Johnson & Brown (2019) shows that the adoption rate of CBT among nurses is still low due to the lack of regulation that supports the role of nurses in providing this therapy. Therefore, more inclusive policies are needed to ensure that nurses can obtain the training and certification necessary to apply CBT in their clinical practice.

From the author's point of view, these findings suggest that the role of nurses in the implementation of CBT should be strengthened through capacity building and comprehensive training. Nursing education institutions need to include CBT modules in their curriculum so that aspiring nurses have sufficient skills in dealing with patients with anxiety disorders. In addition, hospitals and clinics must also provide continuous training programs so that nurses can develop their competence in implementing these therapies.

In addition, more research is still needed to explore the best strategies in integrating CBT in nursing services more broadly. More in-depth studies of how nurses can adapt CBT to the specific needs of patients with GAD are also needed. With the increasing number of anxiety disorders globally, it is important for health workers, including nurses, to have various evidence-based intervention strategies to improve the psychological well-being of patients.

Overall, this study confirms that CBT is an effective approach in reducing anxiety in patients with GAD, and nurses have a significant role to play in the implementation of this therapy. However, challenges in terms of training, policy, and technology adoption remain major obstacles to the implementation of CBT in nursing. Therefore, collaboration between academics, practitioners, and policymakers is needed to accelerate the adoption of CBT in healthcare, in order to improve the quality of life of patients with anxiety disorders.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this study, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is proven to be an effective approach in reducing anxiety levels in patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). The findings from the analyzed literature show that CBT is able to help patients identify negative thought patterns, develop more adaptive coping strategies, and improve their psychological resilience. In addition, this study also highlights the role of nurses as health workers who have great potential in implementing CBT in nursing practice. However, the lack of formal training and limited support from health institutions are the main challenges that need to be addressed immediately so that this therapy can be widely and effectively applied.

In addition to its effectiveness in reducing anxiety, the study also highlights that the adoption and integration of CBT in nursing practice still faces various obstacles, such as regulatory limitations, lack of resources, and resistance to changes in treatment methods. A number of studies show that although nurses have great potential in providing CBT, the lack of training and certification makes the application of this therapy not optimal. Therefore, more inclusive policies and comprehensive training programs are needed so that nurses can effectively implement CBT in helping patients with GAD.

As a recommendation for further research, a more in-depth study is needed on the best strategies in integrating CBT into nursing services, both in the context of hospital and community care. Research also needs to focus on developing training models that can improve nurses' competencies in providing CBT to patients with GAD. In addition, research on the effectiveness of technology-based CBT, such as telehealth and digital applications, is also a promising area to be further studied to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of this therapy in various healthcare settings.

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## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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