



**THE APPLICATION OF SPIRITUAL EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE  
ON PAIN IN CANCER PATIENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

Cancer patients often experience pain complaints on their parts of body. The pain felt by patients can interfere with the patient's daily activities, leading to a decreased quality of life. The provision of Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) to cancer patients is done to help overcome the problem of physical and psychic pain. This therapy combines body energy and spiritual therapy using three stages consisting of the setup, the tune in, and the tapping. A mild tapping or tapping method is given at 18 points on the body. This study aimed to find out the extent of the effect of SEFT on the pain of cancer patients. This research was a descriptive through a case study approach. The number of participants was 4 participants. The sampling was done purposively. The inclusion criteria of this study are cancer patients who complained moderate to severe pain. The pain level was measured using the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS). The data were collected using literature studies, in-depth interviews, and observations. Data analysis was done by using an interactive model that classifies the process into data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Verification). The application of case studies using SEFT theory has a meaningful influence to reduce pain.

**Keywords:** cancer; pain; spiritual emotional

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**INTRODUCTION**

Death caused by cancer jumped and became number one. World Health Organization reported that cancer contributes the most death in the world. The second place of death caused by cancer is at 13 % after cardiovascular disease. Cancer is suffered by 12 million people with 7.6 million died. In 2030, it is estimated that cancer will cause the death of 26 million and 17 million people (Departemen Kesehatan RI, 2015).

Cancer is a disease of abnormal cell growing continuously and interfere with the normal surrounding tissue and also can spread to distant places (Anonymous, 2009). The growth of these cells raises complaints from the cancer patients which is the experience of unbearable pain. Pain is a physiological response felt by cancer patients as a result of nerve cell pressure by abnormal cell growth. The main complaints that patients often give are mild, moderate to severe pain level. Pain complaints can be decreased by giving pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies. SEFT is one of the non-pharmacological therapies. The results of previous study (Hakam et al., 2010) on respondents who obtained analgetic treatment with a combination of SEFT techniques obtained that it changed the level of pain in cervical cancer compared to the group of

patients who received analgetic treatment only. SEFT technique is an amalgamation of psychology as well as spiritual as a method of healing physical and psychic diseases. The application of SEFT will make the patients directly related to God. The type of this research was qualitative research through a case study approach. This study aimed to find out the effectiveness of SEFT therapy applied to cancer patients who complained pain. The pain level of the cancer patients will be measured before and after given SEFT therapy.

## METHOD

The research design used was descriptive through a case study approach. The number of participants involved was 6 patients who experienced pain, while 2 patients were not willing to be participants. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the inclusion criteria of cancer patients who complain of moderate to severe pain and at least were adolescence. On the first day, the pain level was measured and the participants were interviewed regarding their complaints. On the second to fourth day, SEFT therapy was performed and on the fifth day, the pain level was measured again and the participants were interviewed. The pain was measured using the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS). The pain level was within the range of 0-10. Level 0 means that the participants did not have any complain of pain. Level 1-3 means that the participants suffered from mild pain, level 4-6 means that the participants suffered from moderate pain, while level 7-10 means that the participants suffered from severe pain. The data were analyzed using interactive models whose data analysis consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (verification).

Table 1.  
Pain Behavior Response

| Non-Verbal Behaviors Identifying the Pain |   |
|---|---|
| Body Movements                            | Nervous, vigilant, muscle tension, immobility, going back and forth, squeezing hands, unable to stay still, stretching, refusing to change position, stiff joints |
| Facial Expression                         | Frowning, grinding teeth, eyes or mouth closing tightly, opening eyes or mouth wide, biting lips  |
| Vocalizations                             | Groaning, crying, moaning, gasping, screaming, murmuring  |
| Mood                                      | Aggressive, Confused, Fussy, Sad, irritated   |
| Sleep                                     | Increases due to fatigue, decreases due to often wake   |
| Social Interaction                        | Silent, self-withdrawal, pain relief activities, decreased attention span   |

Source: Black & Hawks, (2014)

## RESULTS

There were 4 participants. Based on the data obtained, participant 1 had initial N, aged 55 years old, female, experienced severe pain, and was a cervical cancer patient. Participant 2 had initial A, aged 50 years old, female, experiencing severe pain, and was a cervical cancer patient. Participants 3 had initial W, aged 30, female, experienced moderate pain, and was a breast cancer patient. Participant 4 had initial AR, aged 31 years old, female, experiencing moderate pain, and was a breast cancer patient. Based on table 2, it describes that the level of pain of the participants before being given the SEFT therapy were at the level of severe pain and moderate pain.

Table 2.  
 The Description of Pain Levels and Interview Results before SEFT Therapy (n=4)

| Participants | Pain Level<br>(scale)    | Results of Interview  | Observation Results   |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1            | Severe pain<br>(scale 7) | Sleep was disturbed, the heart often beats suddenly, complains of severe pain in the stomach, sometimes shortness of breath   | Activities on bed when the pain strikes, legs bend, often complain of abdominal pain, groaning, closing eyes. |
| 2            | Severe pain (scale 7)    | Feeling very painful in the stomach, easily short of breath, found difficulties in sleeping.  | Activities on bed, refusing to change positions, groaning, closing eyes when the pain strikes.                |
| 3            | Moderate pain (scale 6)  | Found difficulty in sleeping, always sleeping in the middle of the night, and decreased appetite, complaining of pain in the breasts  | Being sad, self-withdrawing, focusing only on activities to relieve pain,                                     |
| 4            | Moderate pain (scale 5)  | Feeling weak and lacking enthusiasm when moving, irritated, quickly bored and wanted to go home immediately, complaining of pain in the breast, found difficulty in sleeping during the day | Being sad, focusing only on the activities to relieve pain  |

Table 3  
 Description of Pain Levels and Interview Results after SEFT Therapy (n=4)

| Participants | Pain Level<br>(scale)      | Interview  | Results Observation Results  |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1            | Moderate pain<br>(scale 6) | Participant stated that the pain decreased, can walk and able to sleep during the day            | Can walk a distance of 1 meter, often complains of abdominal pain.                                     |
| 2            | Moderate pain<br>(scale 6) | Still feeling the pain in the stomach, insomnia, and decreased appetite                          | Pain in the stomach was decreased, closing the eyes when the pain occurs                               |
| 3            | Mild pain<br>(scale 3)     | Can sleep during the day, increased appetite, still feeling the pain in the breast but decreased | Participant can take a walk, has an increased appetite, wanted to join every time there is an activity |
| 4            | Moderate pain<br>(scale 3) | Feeling weak and lacking enthusiasm when doing activities, complain of pain in the breast        | The participant can take a walk, wanted to join every activity   |

Based on table 3, there are differences in pain levels in the four participants after being given the SEFT therapy.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of this study, it was stated that severe pain was felt in 50-55 years old, which is in contrast to moderate pain which was suffered by those at the age of 30-31 years. Female over the age of 30 years old have a greater risk of suffering breast cancer and this effect increases at the age of 50 years old post-menopause (Faida, 2016). This is not in line with the research conducted previously (Ananda et al., 2018) that the late adulthood (36- 45 years) has a greater pain tolerance than early age (26-35 years) so that in adulthood, the pain experienced is lighter. Participants complained of severe pain with a medical diagnosis of cervical cancer. These participants were older than participants with breast cancer. Previous research (Nabavi, 2019) resulted that the majority are aged 40-60 years. A person's age is increasingly susceptible to degenerative diseases such as tumors and cancer since in the aging process there is a decrease in immune.

Increased age causes the widespread of cancer cells so that older people feel more severe pain. The trigger of mental pressure in 4 participants was negative emotions due to the inability to cope with the psychological threat posed by the state of cancer known as a deadly disease. Negative emotions that become stressors for respondents are a deep concern afflicting the side effects of healing that are again lived and feel unprepared in receiving cancer experience, resulting in a higher level of pain (Nasution et al., 2020). Participants complained of severe pain with a medical diagnosis of cervical cancer. These participants were older than participants with breast cancer. The results of this study obtained that participants who suffered from severe pain were at the age of 50-55 years old. This is in line with the results of previous research (Syatriani, 2011) that most of the respondents' ages in the case and control group were the same, ranging at the age within 41 to 50 years (39.44% and 28.17%).

Based on tables 2 and 3, there were differences before and after SEFT therapy in participants who complained of pain. The results of the study obtained by assessing the pain scale showed that before SEFT therapy, 2 participants complained of severe pain and 2 participants complained of moderate pain. The results of interviews and observations obtained data that participants who complained of severe pain included disturbed sleep, the heart often beats suddenly, and complained of pain in the stomach. The observations results on the participants who complained of severe pain had signs and symptoms in the form of doing activities in bed when the pain appeared, often complained of abdominal pain, groaning, and closing their eyes. Meanwhile, participants who complained of pain were having difficulty in sleeping, always sleeping in the middle of the night, decreased appetite and complained of pain in the breasts. Complaints felt by the participants in the form of sleep disturbances, activities problems, and digestive disorders are things that are often experienced by cancer patients. Therefore, the patients need to take a rest, relax, and sleep. Taking a rest and sleeping are needed by the body for the mental and physical calming process. The first step when a migraine (pain) attacks the patient is to do a gentle massage on the head, try to relax, calm the mind, and get enough sleep, (Budianto, 2015).

According to the results of the research that has been carried out on participants, it can be seen that after receiving SEFT therapy, there was a decrease in pain levels in all participants. Participants experienced a decrease in the level of pain from severe pain to moderate pain and from moderate pain to mild pain. This is in line with previous research (Budianto, 2015) which provided SEFT therapy obtaining that there was a change in pain reduction in the control group with the intervention group. The combination of SEFT therapy made the patient more relaxed and the pain intensity more stable than only giving analgesic therapy. There was a change in pain level after the SEFT therapy treatment, not due to other factors that affecting during the observation, such as age, gender, and pain experience (Brahmantia et al., 2018)

The application of SEFT therapy is very effective for patients who have complaints of pain even though the decrease is a little. This greatly affects the patient's daily quality of life. According to (Zainuddin AF 2009), in the body, there is electrical energy flowing in the nervous system. When this energy flow is obstructed, emotional disturbances or physical ailments arise. SEFT therapy contains 18 main points representing the 12 main meridian pathways. SEFT therapy can be used to streamline the flow of energy in the body by tapping points on the meridian pathways, so that the blocked energy flow can return smoothly.

SEFT therapy is divided into 3 stages of application. Stage 1 is the Set-Up, stage 2 is the Tune-In, and stage 3 is the Tapping. On the first day, participant 1 was assessed and on the second day, SEFT therapy was started. On the second day of the Set-Up process, participant 1 closed his eyes and said the words "Oh my God, I surrender and sincerely to You" not solemnly while stroking his stomach. The Set-Up process has not affected the participants' feelings. On the third day, participant 1 said solemnly, the feeling was more relaxed and the heart became calm. Participants 2, 3, 4 during the Set-Up process closed their eyes and uttered very solemnly the sentences that they were surrendered to God. After the SEFT therapy, the three participants said that the body feels comfortable, the mind calms down and able to sleep. The Set-Up process was to make the body's energy flow point precisely. Not being solemn and sincere when uttering the set-up sentences and being less specific can result in an ineffective SEFT (Zainuddin Ahmad Faiz, 2009).

On the second day of the tune-in process, the researchers knocked participants on the meridian points. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 were asked to relax, not be tense, calm, and think pleasantly. The results of the tune-in process to the four participants were that they felt that their soul and mind were calmer and their pain complaints were reduced. The results of interviews and observations showed that there were changes in the participants including reduced pain complaints, able to do activities, walking, and increased appetite. The Tune-In stage is to feel the emotions of the problem being experienced, then the mind is directed to where the pain/emotion is felt. This stage is part of Self Hypnotherapy which eliminates subconscious memories that cause negative energy experienced by patients (Budianto, 2015).

The third stage, which is the Tapping, is a light tapping on 18 points of the body using two fingers. The tapping stage was performed by tapping several times and tapping lightly on 18 points of the body. All participants said that when the tapping process their

bodies were lighter, less painful, and more enthusiastic when doing the activities. The results of the interview regarding SEFT therapy showed that the participants said many changes were obtained and felt after the SEFT therapy for 3 consecutive days, especially in thoughts, feelings of peace, calm and feeling lighter, relaxed, and accepting the situation that happened. This showed that the participants became aware of the spiritual side that helps calm the soul of the participants, so that participants were calmer, more relaxed, and had positive thoughts. Such spiritual belief that is already owned by the participants provided a sense of relaxation and positive hope so that it was expected to reduce the pain they experienced. The results of the research (Wardatul & Ni'matuzahroh, 2016). The process of applying SEFT for 8 times in 2 days reported that participants could receive changes that were intertwined in the life of participants to the environment.

This is in line with the previous research (Wulandari et al., 2017) that positive feelings experienced by patients included stoic feelings in experiencing diseases, feelings of optimism and peace that breast cancer patients have, while the negative feelings experienced by patients are feelings of fear and sadness at an early stage of finding a diagnosis of breast cancer and a feeling of worrying about having breast removal surgery. The set-up stage aims to draw the participants closer to God. The behavior of cervical cancer patients reflects his thoughts and feelings. Understanding the need for spirituality will affect the quality of life of the individual psychologically, that spirituality will increase the spirit of life for cancer patients to achieve better health by confidence in God for his recovery (Hasnani, 2012).

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that after SEFT therapy, there was a decrease in pain levels in all participants. The changes that occurred physiologically and psychologically were felt by each participant. SEFT therapy is spiritual healing combined with psychology that can generate a spirit of life for positive thinking, strong hope, and confidence in someone to solve psychological and physical problems. SEFT therapy is a therapy that can be applied to reduce negative emotions from patients and other symptoms of physical illness. The implementation of this therapy begins with the patient being able to tell in advance the negative feelings he is feeling. SEFT can increase faith and piety to God, overcome physical and emotional problems, optimize abilities, and increase the strength that is in each person (Fatmawati, 2018). The results of this study are supported by (Novitriani & Hidayati, 2018) that spiritual emotional freedom technique (SEFT) treatment can increase the self-acceptance of the community assisted by women's society.

## **CONCLUSION**

The level of pain in cancer patients can cause the patient to experience a decrease in quality of life and affect their physical condition. The theory application of SEFT therapy can provide good benefits for reducing the pain levels in cancer patients

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