

**AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LAUGHTER THERAPY IN ENHANCING
MENTAL HEALTH AMONG ADULTS**

*** Ms. Riya Bapurao Mohite & ** Asst. Prof. Manali Churi**

** Vidyavardhini's College of Engineering and Technology, Vasai, Maharashtra, India.*

Abstract:

Mental health is a significant part of the total well-being, and the interest in alternative and non-pharmacological approaches promoting psychological health is increasing. Laughter therapy has become a very easy and viable way of facilitating emotional balance and alleviating stress. The current observational analysis looks at the efficacy of laughter therapy in improving the mental health of adults. The participants that were targeted in the study were adults aged between 22 and 45 years old, who were attending the sessions of laughter therapies regularly. The 25 participants who participated in the study were selected using the purposive sampling method and had been practicing laughter therapy at least a month. The data were gathered in interactive sessions and semi-structured interviews, whereby participants were enabled to give their experiences in terms of emotional and psychological changes after the laughter exercises. Data was coded into a standardized data collection table and the analysis of the data was done through a qualitative thematic analysis technique. The findings showed that a consistent attendance of laughter therapy made a significant contribution to reducing stress, enhancing mood, raising the level of energy, and improving emotional health among the participants. Better socialization and a more positive attitude towards life were also a commonly reported outcome of many respondents. The research concludes that laughter therapy is an affordable, accessible, and useful intervention that can be integrated in the community wellness programs to enhance psychological health and overall quality of life of adults.

Keywords: *Laughter Therapy, Mental Health, Adults.*

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Introduction:

Following the increased emphasis on accessible, non-medical strategies that support emotional, psychological, and social well-being, mental health has become an important constituent of the overall wellbeing. One of these approaches is laughter therapy which is applied to improve mental health through the natural process of laughing. Despite the common misconceptions where laughter is linked to joy and comedy, research shows that it has many positive psychological and physical effects. It is able to boost the mood, promote relaxation, and reduce the stress hormones. Laughter also enhances communication, creates a sense of community and strengthens social bonds which proves that its benefits are much more than just entertainment but rather general aspects of human wellbeing.

In recent years, laughter therapy has demonstrated itself as an effective way of reducing the levels of stress, anxiety, and depressed symptoms among diverse groups of people, such as students, older adults, medical and nursing patients, and community organization members. Structured activities, which have been demonstrated to have the effects of restoring emotional balance, enhancing social interaction, and improving the quality of life, include laughter yoga, guided laughter session, and exercises focused on humor. The laughter can help to make the heart healthier, the immune system stronger, and the cortisol levels lower. Psychologically, it reduces the negative emotions, enhances good emotions, and enhances people in managing stressful situations and daily challenges.

Nevertheless, much of previous studies have primarily focused on formal therapy sessions that are undertaken within controlled settings. In spite of the fact that these studies demonstrate that laughing therapy is beneficial, they often do not consider the ways spontaneous laughter occurs in real life. Observing laughing in the actual context will help researchers understand more about the frequency of laughing, its situation, and the impact of laughing on mood and social life. Thus, the observational method was employed in this study to explore the connection between laughing and mental health among a group of adults aged 22 to 45 years who often face pressures of work, and balancing their lives. The paper aims to show how laughter can be a simple, easy-to-use, and effective way to promote a better mental health state by examining the instance in real-life scenarios.

Review of Literature:

1. Therapeutic and Psychological Effects of Laughter Therapy on Mental Well-Being:

The study conducted by Ozyer GUVener (2024) was a randomized controlled experiment to examine the impact of laughter therapy in the psychological wellbeing and self-efficacy of nursing students. Two hundred and eight people were divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group was subjected to the weekly laughing therapy sessions during eight weeks. The study found that laughter therapy improved the psychological wellbeing of the pupils [1] Laughter therapy was also recommended as a non-pharmacology of reducing stress, anxiety, and sadness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Having conducted a literature review, Akimbekov and Razzaque (2021) postulated that therapeutic laughter might lead to decreased stress hormone concentrations and increased anti-stress responses, which is why it is a cheap and ubiquitous response tool.[2] Similarly, in

a quasi-experimental study conducted by Hussain et al. (2016) on older individuals, the researchers found that the emotional well-being of the elderly population could be improved by structured laughter therapy sessions that significantly reduced the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in patients. However, the weaknesses including a small and homogeneous sample size used in the study suggest that further research should be conducted in broader age groups and socioeconomic settings.[3] Morishima et al. (2019) also examined the impact of laughter therapy on the quality of life of patients with cancer aged 40 to 64 in a randomized controlled research. The intervention population used humor and laughter yoga lessons in seven weeks. The results indicated that laughter therapy can positively affect various health-related quality of life aspects and there are no damaging side effects, which is why laughter therapy may impact the quality of life in short-term perspectives positively in cognitive functioning and pain control. [4]

2. Biological and Physiological Mechanisms of Laughter Therapy

Kramer and Leitao (2023) conducted a meta-analysis of eight studies to examine the impact of laughter on physiological stress, particularly cortisol levels. The findings showed a significant reduction in cortisol levels (31.9–36.7%) through laughter-inducing activities such as funny movies and laughter sessions. However, the studies mainly focused on structured interventions, highlighting the need for observational research on natural laughter and its impact on mental health.[5] A quasi-experimental study examined the effects of laughter therapy on general health using standardized questionnaires and physiological tests. The results showed improvements in well-being, stress levels, mood, vitality, and sleep quality.

However, the study used a small and similar group of participants and structured laughter sessions, suggesting the need for further research on natural laughter patterns and psychological well-being in diverse populations.[6]

3. Cognitive and Immediate Stress-Reduction Effects of Humor and Laughter

Yamakoshi et al. (2025) used a randomized controlled trial to investigate the impact of the short-term application of laughter-based therapy on stress and attention in middle-aged adults. The findings revealed that viewing comedy had a decreasing effect on physiological stress and an increasing effect on the attention, cognition and parasympathetic work. Nevertheless, the sample size and controlled environment are such that more observational research efforts are required to gain an insight into the impact of spontaneous laughter in the real world.[7]

4. Community-Based Laughter Activities and Social Health

Supekar et al. (2014) have selected a case-control study design whereby they compare 200 participants in laughter club and 200 non-participants on the basis of health outcomes in form of SF-36 questionnaire and standardized tests of quality of life, flexibility and pulmonary function. The findings indicated that the quality of life, flexibility, respiratory performance in physical, and no significant change in mental well-being were improved in the members of the laughter club. The paper hypothesizes that formal group laughter can be more beneficial to physical health than mental health and that there should be a research on laughter in real community to learn the psychological implications.[8] Besides, Suzuki et al. (2025) examined the relationship between the frequency of laughter, frailty in social life, and physical functioning through a multicentered

observational study of 679 patients with rheumatoid arthritis. Frequent laughter was related to better physical functioning and reduced social weakness. The study concludes that the psychosocial factors such as social proximity have a great relationship with laughter, not the intensity of the disease. These findings indicate the importance of experiencing spontaneous laughing in a regular life and imply that additional research on its correlation with mental health outcomes should be conducted, no matter that other mental health variables such as stress or depression were not explicitly studied. [9]

5. Laughter Therapy as a Complementary Approach in Medical Treatment

The effects of the structured sessions of laughter therapy on the physical and mental health were studied in a quasi-experimental study with a pre-test and post-test approach. It was revealed that laughter therapy was effective as it decreased anxiety, depression, improved mood, and even some physical health measures like cardiovascular fitness. Substantially, the research proposes laughter therapy as a viable complement of well-being. Nevertheless, the study concentrated on arranged therapy sessions and did not investigate the impact of unplanned laughter in normal life which means that observational studies should be conducted further.[10]

6. Effects of Laughter Therapy on Physical and General Health

The review by Singh and Verma (2022) included critical analysis of a range of studies to determine the psychological, physiological and social outcomes of the laughter therapy. This review discovered that directed laughter sessions, comedy exposure, and laughter yoga are the interventions used in the enrichment of mood and stress reduction, anxiety and depression, as well as improvement in the quality of life. Laughter,

physiologically, stimulates the release of endorphins and reduces the amount of cortisol, which emphasizes its biopsychosocial therapeutic usefulness. Nevertheless, the limitations included in the review include small sample sizes, different study designs, and the use of structured interventions over natural laughter, which show that observational research on the spontaneous laugh in real-life situations is required. [11]

7. Laughter Yoga and Symptom Management in Medical Treatment

Chen et al. (2020) developed a quasi-experimental research to investigate the impact of laughter yoga on chemotherapy patients with cancer. The researchers concluded that structured laughter programs led to better mood and general quality of life as well as a substantial decrease in fatigue, nausea, and anxiety. Such findings indicate that the use of laughter techniques of intervention is able to promote an emotional well-being and can contribute to reducing distress in treatment. Nevertheless, the research was limited to clinical patients and structured interventions and could not provide information about spontaneous laughter and its impact on mental health in non-clinical populations, which makes observational research necessary. [12]

8. Evidence from Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses on Stress Reduction

A variety of studies and reviews confirm the advantages of laughter therapy in reducing stress and improving the mental health of people. A quasi-experimental study that involved adult volunteers found that structured laughter sessions reduced anxiety and depression and also increased subjective well-being. Nevertheless, the small sample diversity of the study and a focus on planned interventions restricted the extent of its generalizability. [13] According to a meta-analysis, the use of laughter-based therapies, including

humor sessions and laughter yoga, has been demonstrated to decrease stress in diverse populations, and has secondary effects of lowering anxiety and mood. The direction to examine naturally occurring laughter in real life situations is, however, necessitated by the methodological divergence and dependency on scheduled sessions. [14] The other quasi-experimental study that had affirmed laughing as a non-pharmacological intervention in mental health by establishing that scheduled laughter therapy alleviated the symptoms of depression in adults. The homogenous sample and intervention-centered method, however, limits its use to a bigger population. [15] Finally, a meta-analysis of interventions involving laughter in children offered a systemic analysis of the psychosocial benefits of laughter as it showed a reduction in anxiety, higher level of good mood, and enhanced peer relationship. Most of the studies were however based on structured treatment and so little was known about spontaneous laughter in everyday life. [16]

Research Methodology:

Objectives of the Study:

1. To evaluate the impact of **laughter therapy on mental health among the Adults.**
2. To observe patterns of laughter behavior and their relationship with mental health indicators among adults.

Research Design:

The qualitative observation method proposed to assess the effectiveness of laughter therapy in enhancing the mental health of people aged 22-45 who are prone to work-related stress will be used in the proposed study. The sample of 25 participants who practice laughter therapy on a regular basis after one month was chosen on a purposive basis.

The data were gathered using the interactive sessions and semi-structured interviews, which were based on

the measurement of the degree of stress, mood variations, sleep quality, energy levels, and overall well-being. The answers were taken down in a tabular format of data, both qualitative and quantitative.

The thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data in order to determine recurring advantages and

difficulties of the laughter therapy. The descriptive statistics were resorted to the summary of quantitative data and paired tests were conducted to compare pre-therapy and after- therapy responses.

Thematic Analysis Table:

Theme	Frequency of Mentions	Interpretation
Mood Improvement	40	Participants frequently reported feeling happier, cheerful and emotionally positive after practicing laughter therapy.
Stress Reduction	39	Many respondents indicated reduced stress, increased relaxation and mental calmness.
Increased Energy	16	Some Participants mentioned feeling more active, refreshed and energetic after sessions.
Routine Formation	9	Several Participants stated that laughter therapy gradually became a part of their daily routine.
Physical/ Breathing Benefits	5	A few participants observed improvements in breathing patterns and physical relaxation.

Interpretation:

The thematic analysis of the answers provided by the participants revealed several common themes related to the application of the laughter therapy. The most frequent themes were mood improvement and stress alleviation, and indicated evidence of people having better emotional well-being and relaxation. Additionally, some respondents explained that they had increased energy and that they later integrated laughter therapy in their daily routine. Physical benefits such as improved breathing and physical relaxation also featured among fewer percent of the responders. These findings justify the potential of laughter therapy as a form of mental health treatment because they show that the method improves the psychological and physiological elements of well-being.

Conclusion:

Based on the research findings, laugh therapy can enhance the psychological condition of adults aged 22 to 45. The observations of the participants carried out weekly indicate that frequent attendance of laughter therapy can gradually reduce stress levels, improve

mood, and enhance the psychological well-being of the respondents.

The benefits become more apparent over a few weeks as a result of long-term practice, which at the beginning can have a small scale. The results lend some degree of credence to the idea that laughing therapy can be an

accessible and cheap, as well as effortless, tool of promoting mental health in everyday life.

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