

## THE INFLUENCE OF LEMON AROMATHERAPY AND SEFT ON ANXIETY LEVELS OF POST PARTUM AT ARSY MEDIKA CLINIC

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### ABSTRACT

Psychological disorders during post partum include post partum blues to post partum depression. Early signs of post partum depression include anxiety and worry about the baby. Objective: to determine the effect of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT on the anxiety level of Post partum Mothers. Method: quasi-experimental research design using one group pretest-posttest design. The sample was 30 post partum mothers who experienced anxiety at the Pratama Arsy Medika Clinic. Data collection used the HARS questionnaire. Data analysis was univariate and bivariate (Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test). The average anxiety level before the intervention was 11.57 (Standard Deviation = 8.99 3). The median anxiety level was 11.50 and the mode was 1. The lowest anxiety level was 0, the highest was 30 with a range of 30. The average anxiety level after the intervention was 5.63 (Standard Deviation = 5.096). The median anxiety level is 4.00 and the mode is 3. The lowest anxiety level is 0, the highest is 18 with a range of 18. The combination therapy of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT has a significant effect in reducing anxiety. It is hoped that midwives will apply Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT to reduce anxiety in post partum mothers.

Keywords: Anxiety Level, Lemon Aromatherapy; SEFT.

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### INTRODUCTION

According to (Sari, 2021), the puerperium period begins after the placenta is expelled and ends when the reproductive organs return to their pre-pregnancy condition, lasting about six weeks. The puerperium is a time when mothers experience post partum stress, especially first-time mothers (Tonasih & Sari Mutya, 2020). Post partum mothers also go through several stages, including the taking-in phase, the taking-hold phase, and the letting-go phase. If post partum mothers do not have adaptive skills, various disturbances can occur during their puerperium. These disturbances include post partum baby blues, which can develop into post partum depression. Early signs of post partum depression include anxiety and worry about the baby.

According to Christine et al., 2020 in (Rahayu et al., 2023), anxiety in post partum mothers can have a negative impact on the baby, the mother's mental health, and the hormonal relationship in her marriage. Hormonally, anxiety can lead to significant changes affecting the mother's mood, involving hormones such as progesterone, estrogen, thyroid hormones, cortisol, and prolactin. If post partum

anxiety in mothers is neglected and left untreated, it is feared that it could progress to a more severe.

According to Saidah (2020) in (Dewi et al., 2023), the incidence of post partum anxiety among mothers is still high in various countries such as Portugal at 18.2 percent, Bangladesh at 29 percent, Hong Kong at 54 percent, and Pakistan at 70 percent. In Indonesia, the incidence of anxiety is 28.7 percent. Anxiety levels in primiparous mothers reach 83.4 percent with severe anxiety, 16.6 percent with moderate anxiety, while in multiparous mothers, it reaches 7 percent with severe anxiety, 71.5 percent with moderate anxiety, and 21.5 percent with mild anxiety stage, namely post partum depression.

According to Yunita, 2018 in (Putri & Ca, 2024), anxiety levels can be managed, one of which is through non-pharmacological or natural methods, namely with complementary therapy during the post partum period, which is an alternative that can be utilized to address complaints and aid recovery during the post partum period because it can avoid the use of chemicals, one of which is through aromatherapy. One form of complementary treatment uses essential oils as the main therapeutic agent. Essential oils as aromatherapy are used through inhalation. Essential oils work on the

brain and nervous system through brain stimulation from the olfactory nerves. This response will stimulate the production of neurotransmitters in the brain related to the recovery of psychological conditions such as emotions, anxiety, feelings, thoughts, and desires.

This study is in accordance with (Dewi et al., 2023) who stated that the administration of lemon aromatherapy is effective in reducing anxiety levels in post partum mothers in the working area of Wakambangura Health Center, and the research conducted by (Susilowati, 2021) which stated that the administration of Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) therapy on 5 respondents resulted in a decrease in anxiety from moderate to mild anxiety.

Research on the Effects of Lemon Aromatherapy on post partum mothers has already been conducted with results showing a reduction in pain levels, decreased anxiety, reduced fatigue, increased breast milk production and quality of life, as well as a reduced risk of post partum blues. Similarly, research related to SEFT has also been carried out and shown to have an effect on anxiety. However, research combining Lemon Aromatherapy with SEFT has never been conducted. Therefore, the novelty of this study is the combination of Lemon Aromatherapy with the Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT). The combination of these two methods is expected to quickly reduce the anxiety levels of post partum mothers, thereby preventing more severe post partum complications such as post partum depression or even maternal death. If post partum mothers are healthy/do not experience psychological disorders, they will be able to care for and educate the children they give birth to.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT on the anxiety levels of post partum mothers at Pratama Arsy Medika Clinic. The method used in this study is a quasi-experimental study with a one-group pretest-posttest design.

## METHOD

The method used in this study was a quasi-experimental study with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The population in this study consisted of all

post partum mothers. The sampling method used was purposive sampling, specifically post partum mothers experiencing anxiety. The sample in this study consisted of 30 post partum mothers experiencing anxiety at Arsy Medika Pratama Clinic. The research instrument used an anxiety measurement tool called the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS). The HARS scale consists of 14 questions, with total scores grouped as follows: 1) Score < 14 = No Anxiety, 2) Score 14 – 20 = Mild Anxiety, 3) Score 21 – 27 = Moderate Anxiety, 4) Score 28 – 41 = Severe Anxiety, and 5) Score 42 – 56 = Panic.

The data collection procedure was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents to measure the level of anxiety. This study was conducted by providing 3 drops of Lemon Aromatherapy on cotton to be inhaled from a distance of approximately 2 cm from the nose while taking deep breaths for about 5 minutes, and combined with SEFT therapy. The data processing was conducted using the computer program through the steps of editing, coding, entry, and cleaning.

The data analysis performed included univariate and bivariate analysis. Univariate analysis was used to describe the frequency distribution of age, parity, education, and occupation, while bivariate analysis was used to determine the effect of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT on reducing the anxiety levels of post partum mothers. Before performing bivariate analysis, a normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test at a 5%. The test to examine the difference in anxiety averages before and after the intervention used the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

Before conducting the research, the researcher first explains the research that will be carried out, which involves providing Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT, including the objectives, benefits, and risks that may be experienced from the research to the respondents. The researcher explains to the respondents the rights they will receive if they participate in the research, including the right to refuse to be a respondent. If the respondents agree, they are asked to sign a consent form/informed consent. In writing, the researcher has obtained an Ethical Clearance Letter from the Health Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Muhammadiyah Ahmad Dahlan Cirebon with the number: 005/IX/25/0002/KEPK/STFMC.

## RESULTS

Table 1 Overview of Respondent Characteristics (n=30)

Characteristics of Responden	n	%
Age		
No Risk	21	70
Risk	9	30
Education		
Low	26	86,7
Tall	4	13,3
Work		
Work	6	20
Not Working	24	80
Parity		
Primipara	7	23,3
Multi dan Grandemultipara	23	76,7
Total	30	100

Based on Table1 above, it can be seen that of the 30 respondents, the majority were at a non-risk age, as many as 21 people (70%), had lower secondary education as many as 26 people (86.7%), were unemployed as many as 24 people (80%), and were multi and grandemultipara as many as 23 people (76.7%).

Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Anxiety Before Intervention (n=30)

Mean	Median	Modus	SD	Range	minimum	maximum
11,57	11,50	1	8,993	30	0	30

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that the average anxiety level of respondents before the intervention was 11.57 (Standard Deviation = 8.99). The median anxiety level was 11.50 and the mode was 1. The lowest anxiety level was 0, the highest was 30, with a range of 30.

Table 3 Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Anxiety After Intervention (n=30)

Mean	Median	Modus	SD	Range	minimum	maximum
5,63	4,00	3	5,096	18	0	18

Based on Table 3 above, it can be seen that the average level of anxiety of respondents after the intervention is 5.63 (Standard Deviation = 5.096). The median anxiety level is 4.00 and the mode is 3. The lowest anxiety level is 0, the highest is 18 with a range of 18.

Table 4 Data Normality Test Using Shapiro-Wilk

	df	P value
HARS Pre Test	30	0,028
HARS Post Test	30	0,003

Based on Table 4 above, the Shapiro-Wilk test results obtained a p-value < 0.005, which means the data is not normally distributed.

Table 5 The Effect of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT on Anxiety in Post partum Mothers Before and After Intervention (n=30)

Variabel	Mean ± SD (Pre)	Mean ± SD (Post)	Z	p-value
Skor HARS	11,57 ± 8,993	5,63 ± 5,096	-3,764	0,000

Based on Table 5 above, it can be seen that the average anxiety score (HARS) of respondents before therapy was 11.57 (SD = 8.993), while after therapy it decreased to 5.63 (SD = 5.096).

The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test showed a Z value of -3.764 with p = 0.000 (p < 0.05), which means there is a significant difference between anxiety scores before and after the combined Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT therapy.

Based on the 'Ranks' output, 20 respondents (66.7%) experienced a decrease in anxiety (Negative Ranks), 10 respondents (33.3%) experienced an increase in anxiety (Positive Ranks), and there were no respondents with unchanged scores (Ties = 0).

The combined Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT therapy has been proven to have a significant effect in reducing anxiety in respondents, with the tendency for most respondents experienced a decrease in HARS scores after undergoing therapy.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Anxiety Level of Post partum Mothers Before Administering Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT at the Arsy Medika Pratama Clinic

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that the average anxiety level of respondents before the intervention was 11.57 (Standard Deviation = 8.99). The median anxiety level was 11.50, and the mode was 1. The lowest anxiety level was 0, and the highest was 30, with a range of 30.

The results of this study align with those of (Rahayu et al., 2023), which showed that post partum mothers' anxiety levels before the intervention were moderate, reaching 63.2%. The average anxiety score of post partum mothers before receiving Lemon (Citrus Limon) aromatherapy was also 19.58 ( $SD \pm 5.6$ ). This study also aligns with those of (Dewi et al., 2023), which showed that pre- intervention anxiety levels were moderate in the intervention and control groups at 0%, respectively; severe anxiety levels in the intervention group at 42.8 percent and 50 percent the control group; and panic anxiety levels at 57.1 percent and 50 percent in the intervention group. This is also in line with research conducted by (Rahayu et al., 2023), which showed that post partum mothers' anxiety levels before the intervention were moderate, reaching 63.2%. The average anxiety score for post partum mothers before receiving Lemon (Citrus Limon) aromatherapy was also 19.58 ( $SD \pm 5.6$ )

Post partum mothers often experience anxiety due to the physical and emotional changes they are still adjusting to the arrival of the baby. This period is considered a "crisis period" because it requires many changes in behavior and role values. Anxiety levels vary from person to person (Kasmiati, 2023). Anxiety, defined as irrational fear, is experienced by all individuals and is a natural response to an event. This emotional reaction to fear creates feelings of discomfort that can manifest in the individual's behavior (Nugraha, 2020)

According to WHO (2019) in (Meylin et al., 2025), post partum anxiety is excessive worry, typically occurring after childbirth when a person experiences anxiety after having a baby or becoming a parent (post partum). Psychological conditions such as anxiety, stress, or post partum depression can have various negative impacts if appropriate, holistic care is not provided.

Post partum anxiety, or post partum mental health disorders, are often overlooked and undertreated. The incidence of post partum blues and post partum anxiety ranges from 500 to 800 cases per 1,000, and accounts for approximately 50-80% of cases in various countries. According to a 2009 report by the World Health Organization, the incidence of post partum anxiety is estimated at approximately 10 per 100 live births in women experiencing mild anxiety, and approximately 30-200 per 1,000 livebirths in women experiencing moderate-to-severe anxiety. The incidence of post partum anxiety abroad is quite high, reaching 26-85%. Globally, an estimated 20% of women experiencing post partum anxiety suffer from post partum anxiety (Susilowati, 2021).

### 2. Anxiety Level of Post partum Mothers After Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT Administration at the Arsy Medika Primary Clinic

Based on Table 3 above, the average anxiety level of respondents after the intervention was 5.63 (Standard Deviation = 5.096). The median anxiety level was 4.00, and the mode was 3. The lowest anxiety level was 0, and the highest was 18, with a range of 18.

Research conducted by (Putranti, 2021) showed that the mean score for subjects in the experimental group during the pretest was 75.75, indicating that before receiving the intervention (SEFT therapy), the mean anxiety score for the experimental group was in the moderate category. This score then changed after the intervention (post-test) to 42.17, or low anxiety. In the control group, the mean score at pre-test was 71.75, which is in the moderate anxiety category, and then increased to 74.33 in the post-test. Based on the non-parametric test with the Wilcoxon signed rank test, a p-value of 0.002 ( $p < 0.005$ ) was obtained, which means there is a difference in scores before receiving the intervention in the form of SEFT and after receiving the intervention, which means that there is an effect of providing the SEFT (spiritual emotional freedom technique) intervention on reducing anxiety in pregnant women in the third trimester in the experimental group.

Research conducted by (Anggraini, 2016) showed a decrease in anxiety levels during childbirth experienced by pregnant women or subjects after receiving Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) therapy.

Research conducted by (Sarimunadi et al., 2021), showed that the paired t-test showed  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , therefore,  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_a$  was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a difference in anxiety levels of pregnant women after the pre- test and post-test, indicating that SEFT therapy had an effect on maternal anxiety.

Research conducted by (Yoviana et al., 2024) showed that the SEFT intervention given to patients reduced anxiety and pain levels experienced by mothers after a cesarean section. This was evidenced by patients feeling more accepting of the situation, reduced pain, and being able to independently fulfill basic needs. The application of the SEFT (Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique) method can prevent prolonged grief in mothers.

The results of a study (Mardika et al., 2024), showed a difference in anxiety levels before and after SEFT (Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique) complementary therapy. There was a decrease in anxiety levels after SEFT with a p-value of 0.00.

Research conducted by (Rejeki et al., 2022), showed a significant difference in anxiety scores before and after SEFT therapy. This is evidenced by the p-value of a nonparametric test with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates an average decrease after SEFT therapy compared to before SEFT therapy, with a difference in anxiety scores of 0.9. This indicates a difference between before and after SEFT in mothers undergoing cesarean section.

According to Rahayu M.A. (2023) in (Meylin et al., 2025), after inhaling lemon aromatherapy, mothers feel more comfortable, relaxed, and calmer. This is because inhaling aromatherapy can increase alpha waves in the brain, which are only the size of a pomegranate seed and are located at the base of the brain. This area contains various neurons that interpret the smell and transmit it to the limbic system. The limbic system in the brain represents the concept of emotions, including anxiety, subjective emotions, and mood. When offering aromatherapy to reduce post-operative anxiety, lemon essential oil is chosen because lemon contains the main active ingredient, linalool, which plays a role in anti-anxiety. The aromatherapy chosen to reduce post-operative anxiety is lemon essential oil because lemon contains the main active compound linalool, which plays a role in anti-anxiety.

According to (Rahmawati, 2024), SEFT therapy has an effect on reducing anxiety because tapping on the Hypothalamus- Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) gland can reduce cortisol levels (the stress hormone).

### 3. The Effect of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT on Post partum Mothers' Anxiety Levels at the Arsy Medika Primary Clinic

Table 5 shows that the average anxiety score (HARS) of respondents before therapy was 11.57 ( $SD=8.993$ ), while after therapy it decreased to 5.63 ( $SD = 5.096$ ). The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results showed a Z value of -3.764 with  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a significant difference between anxiety scores before and after the combination of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT therapy.

The combination of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT therapy was shown to significantly reduce anxiety in respondents, with a tendency for most respondents to experience a decrease in HARS scores after therapy.

The research results (Dewi et al., 2023) are in line with the research above, namely from 28 respondents divided into 2 control and intervention groups. The results of the Independent Sample-T test statistical test with a significance level of 0.05 obtained P Value= 0.002.

Thus, it is obtained  $p < \alpha (0.000)$  so that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. So the conclusion, the provision of lemon aromatherapy is effective in reducing the level of anxiety of post partum mothers at the Wakambangura Health Center. Another study conducted by (Putri et al., 2024) showed that the results of the statistical test using the paired T-test showed a difference in the average level of anxiety of post partum mothers in the pretest of 28.3396, and the posttest of 19.2453. It can be seen that the p-value is 0.000 or  $p < 0.05$  which indicates that there is an effect of providing lemon aromatherapy on reducing the level of anxiety in post partum mothers in an effort to anticipate post partum blues

According to (Rahayu et al., 2023), anxiety reduction and mood improvement were reported in patients receiving lemon (citrus limon) oil aromatherapy. Evaluation of the state trait anxiety inventory, mood, positive and negative affect scales, heart rate, and galvanic skin response, as well as heart rate variation after lavender administration, showed that lavender has anxiolytic effects in humans suffering from low anxiety. These findings are also in line with a study by Holmes & Hopkins (2018) in (Rahayu et al., 2023) that lemon (citrus limon) is an effective adjuvant therapy in combination with imipramine, resulting in superior and faster improvement in psychological distress symptoms. This study proves that there is sufficient empirical evidence to strengthen the effectiveness of aromatherapy in patients with anxiety. Consistent with these findings, a study by Kianpour & Mansouri (2016) in (Rahayu et al., 2023) reported that after

administering essential aromatherapy, there was a significant decrease in cortisol release from the adrenal glands, increased serotonin secretion from the digestive system, and reduced anxiety after childbirth. In addition, the application of aromatherapy after childbirth shows an improvement in the physical and psychological condition of the mother and baby and facilitates mother-baby interaction. (Rahayu et al., 2023)

According to Kianpour & Mansouri (2016) in (Putri et al., 2024), after administering essential aromatherapy, a significant decrease in cortisol was reported, release from the adrenal glands, increased serotonin secretion from the digestive system, and reduced anxiety after childbirth. Furthermore, the application of aromatherapy after child birth showed an improvement in the physical and psychological conditions of the mother and baby and facilitated mother-baby interactions. A similar finding was expressed by Matsumoto (2017) in (Putri et al., 2024) who demonstrated the positive effects of aromatherapy. The intervention was administered using a diffuser placed in the subject's nostrils. The proximity of the aroma source to nasal mucus may have increased the interaction between volatile compounds from essential oils and olfactory receptors. According to Maylani, 2020 in (Putri et al., 2024) The inhalation method is an effective method for bringing about beneficial effects in the intervention. Vaporized essential oils are also considered a major component in aromatherapy, which can have several effects such as antiseptic, stimulating appetite, and stimulating blood circulation. Aromatherapy means a treatment that uses fragrances with essential oils or candles in holistic healing to improve health and emotional comfort.

Research results (Yoviana et al., 2024) show the SEFT intervention given to patients has an effect on reducing the anxiety level and the pain experienced by mothers after a cesarean section. This is evidenced by patients feeling able to accept their condition, experiencing less pain, and being able to independently meet basic needs. The application of the SEFT (Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique) method can prevent prolonged sadness in mothers. The results of the research conducted show that there is a significant effect of SEFT (Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique) therapy on mothers' anxiety in facing childbirth.

## CONCLUSION

Combination therapy of Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT has been proven to have a significant effect in reducing anxiety in post partum mothers, with the tendency that most respondents

experienced a decrease in HARS scores after receiving the therapy.

It is expected that midwives can apply and teach clients about complementary therapy using Lemon Aromatherapy and SEFT to reduce anxiety in post partum mothers.

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