

Cosmetic Therapy Improving Psychological Well-Being of Elders in Nursing Homes

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Abstract

Background: There are some evidence about effects of cosmetic therapy from aspects of physiology like brain. However, there are few studies from psychological aspects, and we needed evidence from this aspect. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to obtain evidence of cosmetic therapy on psychological aspects of elders of nursing homes. **Method:** Elders who were long-time care required level 1 or 2 in two nursing homes received cosmetic therapy once by a certified specialist. Elders put on makeup for themselves together following the specialist. The duration of cosmetic therapy was about one hour. They answered the questionnaires about well-being before and after it. **Results:** The Mood score significantly increased ($p < 0.01$), the Satisfaction score significantly increased ($p < 0.05$), the Motivation score significantly increased ($p < 0.05$), the Waking up score significantly increased ($p < 0.05$), the Comfort score significantly increased ($p < 0.01$), and the Vigor score significantly increased ($p < 0.01$). There are high correlations among Motivation, Waking up, Comfortable, and Vigor. **Conclusion:** These results suggest that cosmetic therapy was useful on mood, satisfaction, motivation, comfort, and vigor for elders at nursing homes. Skincare may affect waking up, motivation, and vigor. Making up may irritate aesthetic and affect satisfaction, comfort, and mood.

Keywords

Cosmetic Therapy, Elders of Nursing Homes, Psychological Well-Being

1. Introduction

The number of elderly people has been increasing every year, and the number of

elderly people with dementia is also increasing. Moreover, elders often feel depression or anxiety. Proposing some kind of intervention is needed. Cosmetic therapy is one of the most useful interventions.

There are some studies about cosmetic therapy from physiological aspects. [Ikeuchi, et al. \(2017\)](#) examined the effect of cosmetic therapy on frontal lobe activation by functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) for healthy women. Makeup produced a significant increase in the oxy-Hb level over a wide frontal area in the low vigor. The result indicated a beneficial effect of cosmetic therapy on the brain function of participants with depression and/or dementia.

[Sakatani \(2015\)](#) employed time resolved spectroscopy (TRS) to evaluate the effect of cosmetic therapy on prefrontal cortex (PFC) activity in elderly females in nursing homes and classified into mild and moderate cognitive impairment group by MMSE scores. Cosmetic therapy significantly increased the baseline concentration of oxy-Hb and t-Hb in the left PFC in the mild cognitive impairment group, but there were no significant in moderate impairment group. They suggested that cosmetic therapy affects cognitive function by altering PFC activity in elderly people with mild cognitive impairment. [Tanida & Sakatani \(2014\)](#) also showed the effects of cosmetic therapy on cognitive function.

[Machida & Shirato \(2020\)](#) conducted cosmetic therapy and measured brain wave and showed that 1) oxygenated hemoglobin concentrations in the left prefrontal cortex significantly increased, 2) the Diagnosis Method of Neuronal Dysfunction analysis of electroencephalogram (EEG) showed significant stabilization of EEG patterns. They suggested that cosmetic therapy positively affects the background factors of dementia.

There are few studies about effects cosmetic therapy from psychological aspects. [Zhang, et al. \(2020\)](#) showed the impact of routine skin care on the quality of life for new mothers. Participants were young and effects were not clear for elders. [Kawai et al. \(2016\)](#) showed effects of cosmetic therapy on subjective healthy feelings or depression for healthy elders living in the communities. However, it was not clear about effects of cosmetic therapy for elders in nursing homes from psychological aspects. We needed to investigate effects of cosmetic therapy for elders in nursing homes.

The purpose of this study was to investigate effects of psychological effects (mood, satisfaction, confidence, subjective health feeling, motivation, waking up, comfort, and vigor) of elders in nursing homes.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants were 16 (1 male, 15 female) elders. The number of elderly people was 5 people at 70 years, 9 people at 80 years, 2 people at 90 years. They were users at nursing homes with Long-Time Care Required 1 level or 2 level in Japanese care system. Inclusion criteria were 1) elders could understand the instruction of cosmetic therapy, 2) they could communicate with others. Exclusion criteria was that

elders had serious depression from the facilities' adjustment. Half of them needed help to move. Two people had hearing problems and helpers attended. Two elders needed help to understand question items.

2.2. Cosmetic Therapy Program

The therapist was certified by Shiseido company with training. The cosmetic therapy included the following program. 1) Explanation about expected effects cosmetic therapy both on physical and mental aspects for about 5 minutes, 2) Relaxation including stretch for about 5 minutes, 3) Skin care using all in one gel and massage of face stimulating parotid gland or submandibular gland for about 10 minutes, stimulating face skin, 4) and Make up using eyebrow, lipstick, and cheek about 10 minutes. The instructor often talked with elders warmly. After makeup, elders looked themselves with mirror. They completed informed consent and questionnaire pre and post. Staffs took pictures pre and post. So it was 60 minutes totally.

2.3. Questionnaires

We used the following questionnaires.

1) Mood, Satisfaction, and Confidence item from the STAI (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, [Spielberger, 1972](#)) which measure anxiety from 1 to 4. The STAI was used in a previous study for elders ([Tsutsumitani et al., 2008](#)). The high score shows high anxiety. The STAI constructed two factors like state anxiety and trait anxiety for 20 items. We used the trait anxiety to measure changes by one cosmetic therapy. We chose 3 items like Mood, Satisfaction, and Confidence, because [Yogo, et al. \(1990\)](#) used these items.

2) The subjective health feeling from 1 to 4. We referred to [Kawai et al. \(2016\)](#). And we chose items which get highest scores. The reliability of 4 items was $\alpha = 0.91$.

3) The psychological well-being from cosmetic therapy. We referred to [Watanabe \(2013\)](#). She measured psychological state using 11 question items like mood, or motivation. We chose 4 items which showed significance.

2.4. Procedure

We recruited participants through facilities for elderly two nursing homes. The cosmetic therapy was one time session. Duration of the session was about 60 minutes. They answer the questionnaire before and after the therapy. Also, researchers took pictures of participants, and planned to report in another occasion.

2.5. Data Analysis

We conducted the basic statistics and conducted the paired t-test between pre and post, and correlation coefficient analysis.

2.6. Ethics

We performed this study in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. This

study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Nisikyusyu University (25AVX22).

3. Results

We showed the results of T-test (**Table 1**). The Mood score significantly increased ($p < 0.01$), the Satisfaction significantly increased ($p < 0.05$), the Motivation significantly increased ($p < 0.05$), the Waking up significantly increased ($p < 0.05$), the Comfortable significantly increased ($p < 0.01$), and the Vigor significantly increased ($p < 0.01$). The Comfortable and the Subjective health did not change significantly.

Next, we conducted the correlation coefficient analysis (**Table 2**). The Motivation significantly correlated with the Waking up ($r = 0.89$), the Comfortable ($r = 0.89$), and the Vigor ($r = 0.85$). Waking up correlated with Comfortable ($r = 0.97$) and Vigor ($r = 0.98$). The Comfortable correlated with Vigor ($r = 0.99$).

Table 1. The results of analysis on each questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Pre	Post	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> value
Mood	2.81	3.44	2.96	$p < 0.01$
Satisfaction	2.75	3.25	2.30	$p < 0.05$
Confidence	2.44	2.88	1.85	<i>ns</i>
Subjective health feeling	2.81	3.06	1.60	<i>ns</i>
Motivation	6.31	7.75	2.70	$p < 0.05$
Waking up	6.44	8.06	2.75	$p < 0.05$
Comfortable	6.19	7.94	2.90	$p < 0.01$
Vigor	6.31	8.00	3.02	$p < 0.01$

Table 2. The result of correlation coefficient analysis.

	Mood	Satisfaction	Motivation	Waking up	Comfort	Vigor
Mood	—					
Satisfaction	0.66**	—				
Motivation	0.41	0.25	—			
Waking up	0.46*	-0.01	0.89***	—		
Comfort	0.51*	0.11	0.89***	0.97***	—	
Vigor	0.52*	0.05	0.85***	0.98***	0.99***	—

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

4. Discussion

4.1. Effects of Cosmetic Therapy for Elders

Cosmetic therapy improved Mood and Satisfaction of anxiety in STAI. Since they challenged for themselves and became beautiful faces, they felt good mood and

satisfaction. [Watanabe \(2013\)](#) showed that cosmetic therapy decrease STAI score for healthy young women, we can add the new fact that cosmetic therapy improves mood and satisfaction for elders.

About the Confidence score, although it did not change, it is because of session time. It is only one time session. If we increase session times, the Confidence score may increase.

About Subjective Health Feelings scores, [Kawai et al. \(2016\)](#) showed increased the score for elders in living in community after 3 months intervention. Participants in this study were in nursing homes or day care center because of their physical impaired or low cognitive function. So only one session did not change.

About Motivation, motivation significantly increased. It is because putting on makeup might have power to motivate elders to do self-care and they were glad to see their beautiful face making up, and they communicate with each other, staffs, or the instructors. There are very few studies to show evidence about motivation of elders. [Watanabe \(2013\)](#) showed evidence for young women. Art therapy expresses people's feelings to other things like drawing paper or collage paper. However, cosmetic therapy expresses their feelings to their face to become beautiful. Cosme therapy might irritate humans' aesthetics and elders' motivation increased. It is like [Tagai \(2021\)](#) who showed psychological effects after putting on makeup. However, irritation of aesthetics in this study is process of it.

Moreover, in future, we did not assess cognitive function. [Tanida](#) showed the effects of cosmetic therapy on cognitive function and verbal fluency, we need to investigate both cognitive function and well-being.

4.2. Correlation among Factors and Process Model

Motivation correlated with Waking up, Comfort, and Vigor. Waking up correlated with Comfort and Vigor, and Comfort correlated with Vigor. Skin care with cosmetic might wake up elders' sense of skin and its sense affect comfort or vigor. These are interaction between physical and mental aspect. Also, these correlation support [Tagai \(2021\)](#) in which skin care, makeup, and fragrance affect the mind and body through tactile, visual and olfactory sensation. [Son et al. \(2021\)](#) showed that the impact of skin aging may extends beyond physical health, potentially affecting social interactions and self-esteem.

[Erat & Addor \(2025\)](#) showed that recent advancements in cosmetic science signal a pivotal shift from a narrow emphasis on external esthetics to a more holistic approach that embraces both internal and external well-being. The correlation with factors in the present study may results in interrelationships physical and mental like [Erat & Addor \(2025\)](#).

[Gok et al. \(2023\)](#) showed that the global increase in the aging population has therefore driven a demand for effective anti-aging strategies, leading to extensive research in this field. Cosmetic therapy may useful for future.

As limitation, we did not establish a control group. So, the effect of cosmetic therapy in this therapy is not really validated. And, the number of participants

were small and we need include much more participants. Moreover, we did not measure cognitive function using standard measure like Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE). In future, we need to assess cognitive function to clear participants' characteristics.

5. Conclusion

Cosmetic therapy promotes good mood, satisfaction, motivation waking up, comfort and vigor of elders in nursing homes. It may be useful for them to keep Quality of Life and prevention of dementia.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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