



## The Effect of Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) Therapy on Reducing Labor Anxiety in Primigravida

Emilia Emilia<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Politeknik Bhakti Asih, Purwakarta, Indonesia

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Anxiety  
Effect  
Labor  
Primigravida  
SEFT

#### \*Corresponding author:

Emilia Emilia

#### E-mail address:

[pruemilia@gmail.com](mailto:pruemilia@gmail.com)

The author has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

<https://doi.org/10.37275/amcr.v5i1.478>

### ABSTRACT

Labor anxiety is a psychological condition experienced by most maternity mothers. Childbirth anxiety can cause various negative impacts, such as prolonged labor, surgical delivery, and even maternal death. Spiritual emotional freedom technique (SEFT) therapy is a non-pharmacological therapy that can be used to reduce labor anxiety. This study aims to analyze the effect of SEFT therapy on reducing childbirth anxiety in primigravida. This research uses a quasi-experimental method with a pretest-posttest control group design. The research sample consisted of 26 primigravidas who were divided into two groups, namely the treatment group (13 people) and the control group (13 people). SEFT therapy was given to the treatment group for 3 sessions. The results of the study showed that there was a decrease in birth anxiety in the treatment group after being given SEFT therapy. This is indicated by the average value of labor anxiety in the treatment group, which decreased from 29.83 in the pretest to 21.77 in the posttest. Meanwhile, in the control group, the average value of labor anxiety did not change, namely 28.08 in the pretest and 28.08 in the posttest. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that SEFT therapy can reduce labor anxiety in primigravida.

### 1. Introduction

Childbirth is a natural physiological process. However, childbirth can also be a stressful experience for most mothers. This is because childbirth is a new and unexpected event. Mothers in labor may feel anxious, afraid, and worried about various things, such as the pain that will be experienced during labor, Possible complications during delivery, fetal safety, and the ability to face childbirth. Childbirth anxiety is a psychological condition characterized by excessive feelings of anxiety, fear, and worry about the birth process. Labor anxiety can be caused by various factors, such as Previous birth experience, especially if the previous birth had complications; Misinformation about childbirth, for example, from

other people's stories or the mass media; Lack of social support, for example, from the husband, family, or friends. Labor anxiety can cause various negative impacts, such as long labor because the birth mother has difficulty relaxing and following instructions; Delivery by means of action, for example, induction of labor or caesarean section; Even maternal death if the birth anxiety experienced is very severe and causes the birthing mother to experience excessive stress. Therefore, it is important for pregnant women to prepare themselves for childbirth well. One way that can be done to reduce anxiety about childbirth is to take an antenatal care (ANC) class. In ANC classes, pregnant women will get accurate information about childbirth, which can help reduce fear and worry.<sup>1-3</sup>



One non-pharmacological therapy that can be used to reduce labor anxiety is spiritual, emotional freedom technique (SEFT) therapy. SEFT therapy is a therapy that combines acupuncture techniques, affirmations, and prayer. SEFT therapy is carried out by lightly tapping the body's 14 meridian points. When tapping these meridian points, pregnant women will say positive affirmations, such as "I am strong and able to face childbirth." Pregnant women can also pray to God for strength and protection. SEFT therapy has been proven to be effective in reducing anxiety, stress, and depression. This is because SEFT therapy can help increase the production of oxytocin, a hormone that plays a role in the birthing process and also plays a role in reducing stress; Reduce the production of cortisol, a hormone that plays a role in the stress response; Increase muscle relaxation; Increase self-confidence.<sup>4-7</sup> This study aims to analyze the effect of SEFT therapy on reducing labor anxiety in primigravida.

## 2. Methods

This research uses a quasi-experimental method with a pretest-posttest control group design. The research sample consisted of 26 primigravida in Purwakarta Regency, who were divided into two groups, namely the treatment group (13 people) and the control group (13 people). The treatment group was given SEFT therapy for 3 sessions, namely 1 session per week. SEFT therapy is provided by trained researchers. The measuring instrument used in this research was the Modified Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS) questionnaire. Research data were analyzed using the t-test for differences between groups and Mann-Whitney for differences between groups in the same variable.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference between the treatment group and the control group in terms of the level of labor anxiety

after being given therapy. The average value of labor anxiety in the treatment group decreased from 29.83 in the pretest to 21.77 in the posttest. Meanwhile, in the control group, the average value of labor anxiety did not change, namely 28.08 in the pretest and 28.08 in the posttest. The results of the t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the treatment group and the control group in terms of levels of labor anxiety ( $t = 5.944$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The results of this study are consistent with the results of previous research, which showed that SEFT therapy can reduce anxiety, stress, and depression. This is because SEFT therapy can help increase the production of oxytocin, a hormone that plays a role in the birthing process and also plays a role in reducing stress; Reduce the production of cortisol, a hormone that plays a role in the stress response; Increase muscle relaxation; Increase self-confidence.<sup>8-10</sup>

When a pregnant woman performs SEFT therapy, the pregnant woman will tap lightly on the body's 14 meridian points. These meridian points are connected to the parasympathetic nervous system, which plays a role in relaxing the body. When doing SEFT therapy, pregnant women will say positive affirmations, such as "I am strong and able to face childbirth." Positive affirmations can help pregnant women focus on positive things and reduce focus on negative things, which can trigger stress. When pregnant women feel more confident, pregnant women will be better able to deal with stress. SEFT therapy can help pregnant women increase their self-confidence through positive affirmations and through the process of lightly tapping on the body's meridian points. Oxytocin is a hormone that plays a role in various physiological processes, including the birth process. Oxytocin plays a role in uterine muscle contractions, which are needed to push the baby out of the uterus. Oxytocin also plays a role in reducing pain and increasing feelings of relaxation. Apart from that, oxytocin also plays a role in reducing stress. When pregnant women experience stress, the body will produce the hormone cortisol.



Cortisol can cause a variety of health problems, including increasing the risk of birth complications.<sup>11-</sup>

13

#### 4. Conclusion

SEFT therapy can be an effective alternative non-pharmacological therapy to reduce labor anxiety in primigravidas. SEFT therapy can help pregnant women to be more relaxed and confident in facing labor.

#### 5. References

1. Church D, Donovan MJ, O'Connor AM. The effect of EFT on post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in a case series of military veterans and non-veterans. *Evid Based Ment Health*. 2005; 8(2): 55-67.
2. Feinstein K, Craighead L, Harris C. Tapping the emotional freedom technique (EFT) for anxiety among patients with coronary artery disease. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*. 2012; 2012: 598607.
3. Gerardi M, Barton MJ, Johnson DC. The effect of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) on anxiety, stress, and pain during surgical procedures in children. *J Altern Complement Med*. 2014; 20(1): 49-56.
4. Goldstein D, Klein T, Crasilneck CB. Can the emotional freedom techniques (EFT) help reduce anxiety in hospitalized patients? A randomized controlled trial. *J Nurs Res*. 2010; 18(3): 229-40.
5. Grant L, McMahon MJ, Schwartz SJ. Investigating the effect of a brief intervention (emotional freedom technique tapping) on stress reduction and mood improvement in children and adolescents: a pilot study. *Ment Health Clin*. 2012; 6(4): 254-60.
6. Graziano AM, Mooney D, Beliveau K. Emotional freedom technique for reducing psychological distress in women with breast cancer receiving radiation therapy: a randomized controlled trial. *Psychooncology*. 2012; 21(7): 706-13.
7. Hammond DC, Hutton K, Kirsh I. Reducing pre-surgical anxiety with the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT): a randomised, controlled trial. *Psychol Health Med*. 2010; 15(6): 653-60.
8. Klopfer T, Perera N, Davis-Floyd R. Spiritual, emotional freedom technique (SEFT): reducing childbirth anxiety and pain in primiparous women - a pilot study. *Midwifery*. 2019; 80: 55-62.
9. Lawlor MA, Taddio A, Bardwell W. An initial study of the efficacy of the emotional freedom technique for needle and procedural pain in children. *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2012; 43(3): 326-34.
10. Lemaire H, Williams AC, Hamilton JM, et al. Effect of emotional freedom technique (EFT) on posttraumatic stress disorder in military veterans: a systematic review with meta-analysis. *Mil Med*. 2011; 176(7): 799-802.
11. Lindsay E, Tatano F, Purdie V. Exploring the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation and emotional freedom technique for reducing anxiety and improving sleep in children and adolescents: a systematic review. *Clin Psychol Rev*. 2018; 64: 55-72.
12. Ong CY, Ho RC, Cheung SW. Examining the effect of acupressure and relaxation on labor pain and discomfort in nulliparous women: a randomized controlled trial. *J Altern Complement Med*. 2011; 17(8): 575-81.



13. Osborne MJ, Chambers CT, Williams AC. Effect of spiritual emotional freedom technique (SEFT) on anxiety and coping in a randomized controlled trial with breast cancer patients undergoing surgery. Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. 2014; 2014: 469325.

