Massage Before Cataract Surgery

Benefits include relief from anxiety and added comfort

Hand massage has a positive effect on patients’ vital signs before cataract surgery.

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**Hand Massage for Cataract Surgery Patients**

It’s no surprise that some patients feel anxious before surgery. For some, surgery follows weeks or months of doctor’s appointments and testing, then a diagnosis, then scheduling the procedure. That is a lot of time for worry and anxiety to build up.

Keeping calm before surgery, no matter how big or how small the procedure, is difficult. Massage therapy, however, is showing some promise in terms of being able to help patients better manage anxiety and increase their comfort—two things that may further aid in the healing process.

**The Study**

A 2019 randomized controlled study focused on the effectiveness of hand massage on patient anxiety and comfort before cataract surgery. The 140 study participants were assigned to either the intervention group or the control group. Patients in the intervention group received a 10-minute hand massage before cataract surgery, while the control group received routine nursing care. The visual analog scale (VAS) and Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) were used to collect data.

**The Results**

Researchers found that the median STAI scores of the intervention and control group were 46 and 57 respectively, and the VAS scores of patients in the intervention group were lower after hand massage than that of the control group immediately before surgery. Additionally, the remaining vital signs—with the exception of oxygen saturation—were lower in the intervention group.

From these results, researchers concluded that hand massage reduced the anxiety of patients, positively affected their vital signs and increased their comfort.

**Reference**


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**Slow-stroke Back Massage for Anxiety Before Cataract Surgery**

Another 2019 quasi-experimental study investigating the effects of slow-stroke back massage on the anxiety of cataract surgery patients followed 60 candidates for cataract surgery from Aug. 1, 2015, to March 30, 2016. Patients were randomized into two groups, the intervention group and control group.

**The Study**

On the morning of surgery, anxiety levels were measured using the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for participants in both the intervention and control groups. Researchers also measured the anxiety levels for participants in the intervention group both before and after massage.

**The Results**

Results showed there was a significant difference in the anxiety levels of the patients in the intervention group before and after massage, leading researchers to conclude that slow-stroke back massage is a low-cost and safe method to reduce anxiety in patients preparing for cataract surgery.

**Reference**


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**WANT MORE INFORMATION?**

For more information on some of the research being done on the benefits of massage therapy, browse AMTA’s website at [amtamassage.org/research](http://amtamassage.org/research).