

Beneficial Effects of Horticulture on Hope and Wellbeing of Hospitalized Patients

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Horticulture therapy employs plants and gardening activities in the therapeutic and rehabilitation process and it could be used for the beneficiary of patients. The present study uses a psychological point of view to assess whether or not horticultural therapy is effective for improvement of hope and well-being of patients in the Panchakarma ward at Ayurveda Teaching Hospital Colombo. Twenty four patients were invited to participate in eight horticultural therapy sessions for a period of four weeks in addition to their routine medication and physical therapy. Hope and wellbeing was evaluated using a questionnaire developed by Snyder and Ryff respectively. Data were collected before and after the experiment. A Wilcoxon sign rank test in Minitab statistical package was used to analyse the data. The sample consisted of 37.5% of male and 62.5% of female patients and the results revealed that there is a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in the hope and physiological well-being of patients. Irrespective of the gender, hope showed a significant improvement ($P = 0.0008$) after the treatment. Six theoretically motivated constructs of psychological wellbeing were used to measure wellbeing in patients and all the parameters evaluated under wellbeing; viz., autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self-acceptance of males showed a significant improvement after the treatment, while in females except for positive relation ($P = 0.0898$), other parameters showed a significant improvement. When the responses of both males and females were analysed together, both genders showed a significant difference for hope and wellbeing. The results of the present study corroborates with the studies conducted in other countries. Hence horticulture therapy activities could be effectively used to improve the hope and wellbeing of the hospitalized patients in Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Hope; Horticultural therapy; Patients; Wellbeing.*