



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXAMINATION OF NURSES' THESES ON REFLEXOLOGY PRACTICE IN TURKEY.

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Abstract

Aim: In this definitive literature research, the aim is to examine the thesis examples which has made with reflexology practice; analyze the results of the thesis; planned to give tangible information for researches and health personnel.

Method: In this definitive research, between 2008-2016, National Council of Higher Education Thesis Center database were screened to assess some of the features on the thesis that reflexology is used in nursing initiative. When making research reflexology was key word.

Results: The first thesis that is made use of reflexology practice in the field of nursing was conducted in 2008. Seven of the theses were from Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing department, five from Internal Medicine Nursing department, three from Fundamentals of Nursing department and one prepared by the Child Health and Nursing department. Seven of theses half-experimental, and nine of theses randomized controlled experimental. There are two master theses on nursing area which evaluate the reflexology application. According to both thesis results, reflexology found efficient on aches.

Conclusion: In this examination, in the majority of theses, it led to the conclusion that use of reflexology application is effective. Because of the limited researches on this area, different sampling group studies can be done and different application protocols can be developed.

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Introduction:-

Reflexology, which is one of the complementary and alternative medicine practices, is defined as an individual healing form and a gentle art; it helps to normalize body functions through massage of the reflex points of the eye, ear, hand and feet, which are considered a little mirror of the specific organs and regions of the body. Due to the wide area of use it has and due to the fact that warning points are close to the surface of the skin, foot area is widely preferred for the practice; an effective way to perform reflexology is foot reflexology. Reflexology is a special pressure technique and energy balancing system that is performed by applying pressure to reflex points with rubbing, caressing and squeezing movements in order to ensure healing.^[1,2,3,4]

The pressure and massage applied to the reflex points stimulate the peripheral and central nervous system, which breaks the energy blockage by enhancing brain information flow and ultimately helps the free balanced energy flow to be spread to the relevant organs.^[2,5]

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Reflexology is preferred in increasing the quality of life and state of well-being in cases such as reducing the side effects of gynecological diseases, neurological diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, autoimmune diseases, digestive system diseases, and cancer pain and treatments.^[2,3,4]

The literature indicates that reflexology is mainly used for labor pain⁶, labor pain and labor duration⁴, premenstrual distress^[7], premenstrual quality of life^[8], dysmenorrhea^[9,10], dysmenorrhea period school performance^[11], menstrual period emotional state^[12], premenopausal vasomotor complaints^[13], multiple sclerosis^[14], rheumatoid arthritis^[15], fibromyalgia^[16], constipation^[17], hypertension^[18], cancer pain^[19], chemotherapy-induced nausea^[5] and vomiting as well as for reducing back pain^[20], increasing sleep quality^[21], reducing or eliminating stress-anxiety^[2,13].

Technological advances and scientific knowledge in the field of health have brought changes in the roles and responsibilities of nurses. As a result, there is a need for inclusion and proper use of complementary therapies in nursing interventions. At this point, nurses need to learn about therapies with multidimensional benefits such as reflexology. Reflexology is thought to have a powerful therapeutic effect between the nurse and the patient, because touching creates a safe and unbiased environment and has strong therapeutic aspect through a sincere nurse-patient relationship.

The purpose this descriptive literature study is to examine the thesis examples about reflexology practice, analyze the results of the theses, and give tangible information for researches and health personnel.

Method:-

In this descriptive study conducted between 2008 and 2016, National Council of Higher Education Thesis Center database was reviewed to assess some of the features of reflexology use in nursing initiative. Reflexology was used as the key word in the searching. Inclusion criteria for the theses to be examined were; existence of reflexology word in the title and thesis and being conducted in nursing and/or department of nursing. The theses which were accessed were evaluated according to the titles, and seven theses were eliminated among 23. A total number of 16 theses were included in the study. After they were separated as master's and doctoral theses, the theses were examined in chronological order. Numerical evaluations were used in the analysis of the data, and the thesis results were summarized as graduate or doctoral dissertation, dissertation publication year, purpose of thesis, sample group, number of participants, design of thesis, and thesis results.

Results and Discussion:-

The first thesis that used reflexology practice in the field of nursing was conducted in 2008. Seven of the theses were from Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing department, five from Internal Medicine Nursing department, three from Fundamentals of Nursing department and one from the Child Health and Nursing department. Seven of these theses were quasi-experimental, and nine of them were randomized controlled experimental.

Table 1:- Evaluation Of Master Theses.

Authors/ Year	Aim	Design	Sample	Results
Ozdemir and Ovayolu, 2011	To determine reflexology positive effect on the management of fatigue, cramp and pain	Randomize trial	Intervention: 40 Control:40	reflexology is one of the supplementary methods to reduce the symptoms like fatigue, pain and cramp and can be used with pharmacologic methods.
Koc and Gozen, 2013	The study was designed to evaluate the effect of foot reflexology applied to infants on the acute pain that might develop after the vaccine injection.	Quasi-experimental	Intervention: 30 Control:30	The foot reflexology applied to infants was determined to be effective on relieving them before a painful intervention and making them feel less pain during and after the intervention.

There are two master theses in nursing field which evaluated the reflexology practice (Table 1). According to the results in both theses, reflexology had effects on pain.

Table 2:- Evaluation Of Doctoral Theses.

Authors/ Year	Aim	Design	Sample	Results
Bolsoy and Sirin, 2008	To determine the effects of reflexology on relieving premenstrual distress	Randomize trial	Intervention: 31 Control: 31	There was a statistically meaningful fall in the points of each of the menstrual distress sub-groups and while the highest score change (% 60.27) was seen in the menstrual period of the sub-control group.
Güven and Karatas, 2011	To determine the effect of foot reflexology applied to individuals with hypertension on blood pressure and quality of life.	Quasi-experimental	219 patients	Foot reflexology which was applied is effective to reduce blood pressure, LDL cholesterol, total cholesterol and triglyceride levels and to raise HDL level and to improve the quality of life.
Akın Korhan and Khorshid, 2011	To examine the effect of reflexology on vital signs and sedation levels in patients receiving mechanical ventilation support	Randomize trial	Intervention: 30 Control:30	Reflexology applied to patients receiving mechanical ventilation support reduced the level of sedation required and positively affected the vital signs.
Polat and Ergüney, 2013	To determine effect of reflexology, applied to patients with COPD, on dyspnea and fatigue.	Quasi-experimental	Intervention: 30 Control:30	The reflexology was determined to decrease dyspnea and fatigue and increase energy in the experimental group.
Özdelikara and Tan, 2013	To determine the effect of reflexology on nausea, vomiting, and fatigue as result of chemotherapy in breast cancer patients	Quasi-experimental	Intervention: 30 Control:30	Reflexology reduces distress and fatigue, nausea, vomiting and retching experience, formation in the experimental group.
Cevik and Zaybak, 2013	To examine the effect of reflexology on constipation in the elderly	Quasi-experimental	25 patients	Reflexology increase the number of bowel movements and amount of feces; decreased the feces consistency, straining during defecation and feeling of completely evacuating after a bowel movement.
Yılar and Pasinlioglu, 2014	To determine the effect of foot reflexology on the time of labor pain of childbirth.	Quasi-experimental	Intervention: 64 Control:64	Foot reflexology has a positive effect to reduce the labor pain and the duration of II.
Alp Yılmaz and Baser, 2014	To determine the effect of reflexology on dysmenorrhea and school performance.	Randomize trial	Intervention: 29 Control:29	Reflexology and foot massaging had a significant effect on dysmenorrhea, absence from school, and academic achievement.
Gözü Yesil and Baser, 2014	To determine the effect of foot reflexology applied to women aged between 40 and 60 on vasomotor complaint and quality of life.	Randomize trial	120 patients.	Reflexology was effective to reduce vasomotor symptoms and to increase quality of life in menopausal women.
Avcı and Oskay, 2015	To determine the effect of reflexology for decreasing	Randomize trial	Intervention: 54 Control:46	Reflexology are the result to be effective in reducing anxiety and

	postoperative pain and anxiety after total abdominal hysterectomy.			pain.
Ünal and Balci, 2015	To examine the effectiveness of reflexology and back massage in optimizing the sleep quality and reducing the fatigue of hemodialysis patients	Randomize trial	Intervention1:35 Intervention2:35 Control:35	The reflexology and back massage improved the sleep quality and reduced the fatigue in patients taking hemodialysis treatment.
Gök Metin and Özdemir, 2015	To investigate the effects of aromatherapy massage and reflexology on pain, and fatigue in patients with rheumatoid arthritis	Randomize trial	Intervention 1:17 Intervention2:17 Control:17	Aromatherapy massage and reflexology were effective in reducing pain and fatigue and improving health perception in patients with rheumatoid arthritis
Alan and Terzioğlu, 2015	To determine effects of reflexology and progressive muscle relaxation exercises on pain, fatigue, anxiety, depression and quality of life during chemotherapy process in cancer patients.	Randomize trial	Intervention1:20 Intervention2:20 Intervention3:20 Control :20	Reflexology and progressive muscle relaxation exercises should be used safely in decreasing pain, fatigue, depression and anxiety level and enhancing quality of life during chemotherapy process in gynecologic cancer patients.
Dogan and Tan, 2015	To determine the effect of reflexology applied to MS patients on pain, fatigue, and life quality.	Pre test-post test	Intervention:33 Control:33	Reflexology is thought to be used as supportive to increase life quality and decrease pain and fatigue in MS patients.

In doctoral theses, on different sample groups, reflexology application was investigated in order to examine its effects on nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, labor pain and quality of life (Table 2).

Results of the doctoral thesis indicate that most of the theses found reflexology application an effective method. Reflexology in the field of nursing was used for the first time in 2008 and most of the studies were found to be conducted by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing. Review of the literature indicates that the studies using reflexology practice have increased in the last decades and most of them are in the field of birth and gynecological diseases^[4,9]. The theses conducted in our country also have similar features. There are two master's theses and 14 doctorate theses in the field of nursing where the effectiveness of reflexology practice was assessed. Most of the studies were randomized-controlled experimental studies (Table 2). The effects of reflexology on blood pressure and quality of life in individuals with hypertension, on alleviating premenstrual distress, on sedation level and vital signs in patients with mechanical ventilation support, on dyspnea and fatigue in patients with COPD, on chemotherapy-induced nausea, vomiting and fatigue in patients with breast cancer, on constipation in the elderly, on labor pain and duration, on dysmenorrhea and school performance. Results were examined from various aspects and positive outcomes were obtained^[10-18].

The literature indicates that reflexology practice was performed in a similar way for different purposes, and their effects were investigated. It is important to note that the majority of the studies are at doctoral thesis level and that they are experimental, providing the necessary conditions for the investigation of the effect of reflexology practice.

Conclusion:-

The present study revealed that reflexology was found to be effective in the majority of the theses. Various sampling group studies and application protocols are recommended to be performed as there is limited research on the issue in this field.

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