PREFACE

Epilepsy is a chronic, and stigmatized brain disorder with serious psycho-social and economic implications. A recent study by WHO (2002) estimated that in many developing countries the need for chronic disease will increase multi-fold in the near future. As many as one third of the chronically ill are not able to work, attend school or perform daily living activities. The impact of epilepsy is much more than that of other chronic illnesses due to stigma and misconceptions of epilepsy, which are culturally ingrained in every community throughout the world.

Globally there has been a growing interest in the use of groups in medical setting, as social support predicts better coping with the illness, improved adherence to medical regimen and positive outcome in chronically ill patients. Adequate knowledge and good information about every aspect of the illness to the patient and family may aid them making informed choices, and to retain a perception of control. This approach can promote patient autonomy, better health outcome, optimal physical and psycho-social functioning and better quality of life. This is a growth oriented and developmental approach with wider implications. However, the outcome research of such programs are very rare as pointed out by The International Association of Group Psychotherapy (IAGP) and Commission for Control of Epilepsy.

In this connection, a novel approach of psycho-educational group sessions for persons with epilepsy and their family members are practised in the epilepsy clinic of the Department of Neurology, SCIMST, Thiruvananthapuram for the past many years. The Centre has also been practicing Yoga- Meditation (Pnrayama) as an add on therapy with proven efficacy in controlling seizures among patients with epilepsy. The present endeavor of the investigator is to translate and validate Malayalam version of two epilepsy specific tools and to use a prospective randomized experimental research design to evaluate the relative efficacy of these two intervention programs (Psycho-education and Meditation) in comparison to a control group of patients.

This Research Report is divided into five chapters. The first introductory chapter gives updated information of the various psycho-social aspects of epilepsy. The second chapter covers the review of literature with relevant studies. Chapter 3 covers the methodology with details of tools development and procedures followed for its standardization. Chapter 4 discusses the results in detail. Chapter five gives the summary and conclusion of the study.

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