

**MANAGEMENT OF PERFORMANCE ANXIETY**  
**THROUGH HYPNOTHERAPY OF UNIVERSITY LEVEL**  
**HOCKEY PLAYERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this investigation was to assess impact of Hypnotherapy in management of performance anxiety of Hockey Players of University Level. 16 Participants were selected through random sampling from Devi Ahilyabai University, Indore (M.P.). All participants were educated. For the obtaining the score on Anxiety, SCAT (Sinha's Comprehension Anxiety Test) was used, which has 90 items, based on Yes/No response of participants for anxiety. The Reliability of SCAT is 0.85 (test retest) and Validity is .62 with Taylors manifest anxiety scale. Research was based on Pretest and Posttest research design. Statistically analysis was done by paired *t* test. Results indicate that the "*t*" value, 5.73, which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence, shows that Hypnotherapy manage the symptoms of performance anxiety effectively.

**Keywords-: Hypnotherapy and Performance Anxiety**

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Anxiety is a human emotion. Everyone experience it. Yet, each person experiences this emotion in unique ways. The reason behind this paradox is that anxiety is best considered a complex, subjective experience. Anxiety is produced by multiple causes. It is expressed by a diverse set of symptoms. These symptoms include physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive components. This is why we can ask many different people about a very common experience; yet, get totally different definitions of what it means to be anxious. Some anxiety is normal and often helpful to stay mentally and physically alert (Parviz, B and Minoo, A ; 2010).

According to Bryant, R.A. (2008) “Anxiety can be defined as a fear that persists even when a salient threat is not present.” Rosenwald, G.C.(1961) defined anxiety as “psychological mechanism whereby the current intensification of a dangerous drive results in the elicitation of defenses.” Sarason, I.G. (1959) reported that “Anxiety resulting from the sense of threat then disrupts attention and memory function.” DePhil, M.B., Brilot, B., Nettle, D. (2011) reported that feelings of anxiety arise to prepare a person for threats. In humans, anxiety symptoms are distributed along a continuum and different symptom levels of anxiety predict outcomes. Responses consist of increased heart rate, stress hormone secretion, restlessness, vigilance, and fear of a potentially dangerous environment. Anxiety prepares the body physically, cognitively, and behaviorally to detect and deal with threats to survival. As a result, a person’s body begins to hyperventilate to allow more oxygen to enter the bloodstream, divert blood to muscles, and sweat to cool the skin. “In individuals, the degree to which an anxiety response is developed is based on the probability of bad things happening in the environment and the individual’s ability to cope with them”

Psychologists Liebert and Morris (1967) originally attributed anxiety to two main components: worry and emotionality. Worry refers to cognitive factors, such as negative expectations or feelings of inadequacy, and emotionality refers to the physical symptoms, such as increased heart rate, muscle tension, or butterflies. Anxiety reactions can be generalized from previous experiences to testing situations-Mandler,G. & Sarson,S.B.(1952) . Impaired cognition (impaired attention, concentration and memory) is one of the most important feature of anxiety. Which decrease our working efficacy because in hockey there is

need of proper planning and concentration but due to excessive level of Performance anxiety, its make poor performance.

Based on the functional theories of anxiety, Performance anxiety is one of the important factors of our life. As we know that our mind is a powerful component of our body. There is a need to make proper use of it in our task, which make our efforts fruitful. If we think positively, we will have positive results. If we think negatively, we will have negative results. A normal component of participating in sports is feeling nervous before a competition. However, there is no need to get nervous. This is just our mind trying to control our thoughts. Performance anxiety is the part of our negative feeling of our mind which is harmful for our performance. A sport man feels Performance anxiety in the opening minutes of the game. He may feel butterflies in your stomach or your heart pounding. Some athletes like to feel pregame jitters before competition. These athletes think of pregame jitters as a sign of readiness and energy. Other athletes think of pregame jitters as a sign of nervousness as reported by Edger, M. (2012).

Fitzgerald,R. (2013) states that Many athletes are unaware that the experience of anxiety in the athletic context is actually necessary in order to perform optimally through preparing you both mentally and physically. However, while some anxiety is necessary for performing your best, excessive levels can have a negative impact on performance, often causing worry and negative thinking in relation to competition. Athletic competition is no doubt stressful due to the demands placed on each individual. Often times, performance anxiety occurs when an athlete doesn't have the necessary tools to deal with the stressors involved in a certain situation. The experience of over-arousal in association with competition anxiety is more common among athletes than it may seem, increasing the value of utilizing techniques aimed at controlling context specific anxiety. Anxiety is the one of important factor which is responsible for the performance of players reported by Nalyon (2013). Hockey Players face anxiety before their matches. This is a normal phenomena but excessive amount of anxiety is harmful for the performance of hockey players. At university level, they don't get proper treatment of anxiety due to lack of professionals of mental health. This decreases their

efficacy in the match. So management of such type anxiety is an important phenomenon at university level.

Serious hockey players are often determined to find anything that will give them an edge over their competition, as well as help them perform optimally. Hypnosis and imagery have been utilized by many such athletes to improve their game. While some regard hypnosis as some mystical or magical form of mind control, it is actually a legitimate form of treatment which has proven to be effective in bringing about positive change, developing new habits and behaviors, and releasing unhealthy or unproductive emotions, habits and behaviors. Many well-known athletes have worked with highly trained hypnotherapists to achieve significant gains in their personal performance, regardless of their sport.

Since the unconscious mind is really the driving force between most of our beliefs and behaviors, it makes sense that a technique which elicits change at the unconscious level can be highly effective. Hypnosis is such a technique. Hypnosis can help an athlete overcome issues of self-doubt which may be keeping him from moving to the next level. It can help an athlete hone his skills, fine-tune a technique, and have a level of self-belief and confidence which will enable him to excel beyond what he may have previously thought possible. Hypnosis can also help an athlete acquire the intense focus required to be at the top in his sport. Hypnosis can help an athlete overcome performance anxiety or pre-game jitters which can make the difference between winning a gold medal and coming in 6th place.

The term “hypnosis” comes from the Greek word Hypnos, meaning “Sleep”. Hypnotherapists use exercises that bring about deep relaxation and an altered state of consciousness, also known as trance. According to Ronald (1959) “Hypnosis is a goal directed striving which takes place in an altered psychological state.” Hypnosis is a natural state experienced at times by nearly all human beings. For example, people often lapse into hypnosis while driving, part of their attention remains focused on driving and reacts appropriately to external needs, but their mind wanders to other subjects. When they return to full alertness (suddenly or gradually), they may realize that they cannot remember any of the past few minutes, although in fact they were driving safely throughout. Similarly, the mind

may wander while reading and you may suddenly realize that you have read several pages of a book without absorbing any of the meaning. The success of hypnosis depends on the subject's cooperation-Yapko (2003) & Lynn and Kirsch (2006).Some people experience hypnosis much more frequently than others, and similarly some people may be more susceptible to being hypnotized or to suggestions made under hypnosis than other. A person in a deeply focused state is unusually responsive to an idea or image, but this does not mean that a hypnotist can control the person's mind and free will. On the contrary, hypnosis can actually teach people how to master their own states of awareness. With the help of hypnosis subjects can affect their own bodily functions and psychological responses.

The word trance is altered state of conscious or synonym of hypnosis, which permits the operator to evoke in a controlled manner the same mental mechanisms that are operative spontaneously in everyday life. There is no hard and fast definition for a hypnotic experience or "trance." The best way trance can define "an altered state of consciousness with heightened relaxation, one that represents a shift from "ordinary" waking consciousness. Some emphasis has been given to the ideas that a trance state represents a more internalized experience, a narrowing of focus, "dissociation," increased suggestibility, or automatism. With the help of trance, it may be easier to understand that our minds have the ability to shift from one state of consciousness to another very easily.

During hypnosis, your body relaxes and your thoughts become more focused. Like other relaxation techniques (used in hypnotherapy as induction), hypnosis lowers blood pressure and heart rate and changes certain types of brain wave activity (Dwivedi et al, 2011; Eitner et al. 2006). In this relaxed state, you will feel at ease physically yet fully awake mentally and may be highly responsive to suggestion. Your conscious mind becomes less alert and your subconscious mind becomes more focused (Dwivedi, S.K., 2011). Hypnosis is normally preceded by a "hypnotic induction" technique. Hammond (2008) stress on "Hypnotic induction and deepening of trance are not distinct phases but simply refer to the process of increasing the focus and concentration of attention by the patient."

Hypnotherapy is a form of psychotherapy (A.P.A. 2014). According to Alladin (2007) “hypnotherapy can be subdivided into eight stages”-

- Preparing the patient for hypnosis
- Hypnotic Induction
- Deepening of Hypnosis
- Therapeutic Utilization of Hypnosis
- Ego-Strengthening
- Post-Hypnotic suggestion
- Self-Hypnosis
- Termination

Hypnotherapy is a scientific process which has remarkable impact in treatment of Medical and Psychological disorders or concern, such as psychosomatic disorder ((Flammer & Alladin, 2007),enhance academic performance in cases of special kids with learning disabilities (Crasilneck & Hall, 1985; Johnson, Johnson, Olson, & Newman, 1981),Hypertension (Gay,2007;Lynn et al., 2000;Raskin et al, 1999),Increased Immunology through Hypnotherapy (Neumann,2005; Montgomery & Schnur,2004; Wood et.al.2003),pain management (Castel et. Al., 2007; Elkins et. Al., 2007;Hommand,2007 ; Karlin, et. Al., 2007; Jensen, et. Al., 2006) etc. Thousand of researches have been done to find out impact of hypnotherapy on anxiety. Present study has a aim to assess the impact of hypnotherapy on symptoms of anxiety (with anxiety disorder or involving anxiety as a symptom of any other medical condition).

### **Objective of Present Study**

To examine the efficacy of hypnotherapy in management of anxiety of University Level Hockey Players.

### **Hypothesis**

Ho: There is no impact of number of exposures of Hypnotherapy in management of performance anxiety.

## **Method**

**Sample plan-** A total 16 participants from Devi Ahilya University, Indore (M.P.) through random sampling. The mean age was 20.8. All participants were educated. At the time of research work, no participant was on Psychiatric Medicine.

**Research Design-:** Pretest-Posttest research design was used in this research.

## **Measures-:**

- 1. Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test (SCAT)-:** it is developed by Dr. A. K .P. Sinha and Dr. L. N. K. Sinha. It has 90 Items. It is two point scale based on Yes or No response of Subject. There is provision of one mark on each Yes response and zero on No. the reliability of the test was 0.85 through test Retest method. The internal consistency reliability was ascertained 0.92 through adopting Odd-Even Procedure (N=100) with the help of the Spearman-Brown formula. The validity assessed through Correlation between SCAT and Taylors Manifest Anxiety Scale, it was 0.62, which is significant beyond 0.01 level of confidence.
- 2. Arons depth scale-** it is developed by Harry Aron, which has 6 divisions, which adequately describes trance depth and includes responses that indicate the specific level of depth. In this study therapeutic workout was done at least level two. The description of trance level is given below-

<b>Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expected Responses</b>
1	Light Trance	Relaxation, eye lock (eyelids won't open upon suggestion).
2	Light/Med Trance	Heavy or floating feeling, locking of isolated muscle groups such as the arm.
3	Medium Trance	Smell and taste changes, number block (aphasia).
4	Med/Deep Trance	Response to post hypnotic suggestions, analgesia (no pain).
5	Deep Trance	Positive Hallucinations (Seeing something that is not there).
6	Somnambulistic	Negative Hallucinations (Not seeing something that is there).

**Procedure-:** After selection the participant they informed about the research purpose and told them "their response will be kept confidential". After it, pre data has collected of the all participants, in the form of clinical interview and psychological testing. Hypnotherapy was given according the nature of their symptoms of anxiety. Minimum no of exposure were 10

and maximum 13 between collecting pre and post data. The time was constant for sessions of therapy (45-60 minute in a session).

## Result

As pointed out in preceding section, in order to study the impact of hypnotherapy in management the symptoms of anxiety, the following table has been drawn-

**Table I:** Showing mean score of Pre and Post test, S.D., Correlation, S.Ed and t-value.

Test	N	Mean	SD	SE <sub>d</sub>	r	t-value
Pretest	16	44.50	20.74	5.36	+0.60	5.73*
Posttest	16	20.63	11.33	2.94		

d.f. =n-1 (For paired group) =15

\*significant at 0.01 level of confidence

As shown in Table I, the mean value of Pre test is 44.50 and the mean value of Post is 20.63. Which shows difference in both values and obtained *t*-value is 5.73, which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. Thus our null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is significance impact of no of exposures hypnotherapy in management of performance anxiety i.e.

## hypnotherapy manage effectively performance anxiety of hockey players.

### Discussion and Interpretation

Hockey is the game of balance between mind and body's coordination. If performance anxiety occurs in the game, it'll ruin the goal of players. The finding of the present research shows that hypnotherapy mitigates the symptoms of performance anxiety of university level hockey players. For sport man, this is necessary to work in same direction of his body and mind but most of the time the mental set of a sport man doesn't work in the same direction. For this purpose sport psychologists used to give the mental training to the sport men for improving the performance in the match, not in imaginary world. Mental Training, which refers to mental skills and techniques used in sports, is viewed as one of the most important aspects in development successful sportsmen. Most coaches consider sport to be at least 50% mental when competing against an opponent of similar ability. Mental training helps to sport person to reduce the magnitude of negative mental set (Conditioning).



Is there a significant relationship between performance environment and the performers training? it would be both interesting and useful to pursue more study in this area. Comparing all the different therapies may be useful (Wilson; 1997). It would help identify the most useful strategies for certain personalities.

Self-efficacy is important for success, a variety of psychological strategies (i.e. modeling, feedback, imagery, self-talk and hypnosis) have been used by sport psychologists to engender athletes' regulation of self-efficacy levels (Short & Ross-Stewart, 2009).

Self-efficacy levels are proposed to impact sport performance by determining levels of motivation that will be reflected in the challenges individuals undertake, the effort they expend, and their levels of perseverance (Bandura, 1997). Most studies have been involved with reducing anxiety. In these studies researchers assumed that anxiety decreased the quality of performance. But in reality it was found that performers with high amounts of formal training performed in a superior manner in anxious situations.

Modern hypnotherapy is widely accepted for the treatment of anxiety and its co-morbid medical conditions. The Common treatment options include lifestyle changes, psychotherapy and medications. Ergene, T. (2003) Said that “The most effective interventions are those that combine skill-focused strategies (i.e. study skills training, test-taking skills) with cognitive (i.e. cognitive restructuring) or behavioural approaches (i.e. relaxation training, systematic desensitization).”

Dwivedi, S.K. (2014) assessed clinical efficacy of hypnosis on anxiety. He found hypnosis along with training of self hypnosis to the participants, is most effective therapy for anxiety and anxiety related problems such as I.B.S., depression, exam anxiety, PTSD etc. The studies in the field of hypnotherapy and exam anxiety, indicates “hypnotherapy reduces not only level of exam anxiety but enhances academic performance also.” Mathur, S. and Khan, W. (2011) reported- “hypnotherapy is not only effective for reduction of exam anxiety but improved academic performance also.” Hammond (2010) also states that “Hypnosis has been shown to be effective in reducing state anxiety associated with cancer, surgery, burns and a

variety of medical/dental procedure.”According to Kahn, Stephen (2010) -“Hypnosis is an effective and powerful intervention for most types of stress and anxiety.”

Hockey players are used to a type of mental set for mitigating their performance anxiety. Mental set was assessed very positively with performance (Dwivedi ,S.K.; 2008) and such type of mental set works on subconscious level. So this is not essay to change the mental set. Under process of hypnotherapy, mental set can easily change. So its provides a positive sport feeling and energy for obtain victory.

Richmen et al. (2006) explained that performance anxiety’s symptoms can be defined as pain and tiredness or sleeplessness. They advocated that many players who complaints about sever pain before the game, is a phenomena of low level of performance and low level of satisfaction. Such types of player are used to occupy to mitigating the pain but there is no pain, this pain is only reflection of their performance anxiety only. Hypnotherapy is very effective treatment of pain associated with anxiety. Jensen et al. (2006) got “hypnotic treatment is helpful for chronic-pain patients not only in achieving analgesic effects but also in anxiety management, improving sleep, and enhancing quality of life.” Empirical research indicates that hypnosis may contribute to the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral therapy. Smith,W.H. (1990) found “Hypnotherapy and training in self-hypnosis can help persons achieve remarkable success in alleviating anxiety, not only in anxiety disorders, but also in any problem involving anxiety.”

The efficacy of hypnotherapy is more than other therapies because self hypnosis is part of hypnotherapy, which helps the participants to maintain present status till long time. With the help of hypnotherapy participant mitigate the symptoms of anxiety, not only in anxiety disorder but also in any problem involving anxiety as a remarkable feature. Because Hypnotherapy works on the principal of mind-body intimate connection, which improves one’s self regulation.

**Conclusion-** There is much fascination with the study of performance anxiety. Hockey players feel a need to understand this phenomenon if they are to be in control of their body

and mind. Players agree that performing in public stimulates performance anxiety but how players respond varies and that anxiety can help or hinder depending on the intensity of anxiety felt. Anxiety should be seen as a helpful warning that alerts us to possible danger and will allow us to take steps to avoid that which we feel anxious about. Errors made in practice should be viewed simply as ways not to play and not as mistakes. Everything must be kept in context, patience, persistence, self-awareness and the attitude of self-searching will all help in the control of performance anxiety (Havas;1992).

With emphasis on relaxation, preparation and self-discovery, anxiety can be controlled. Handling performance anxiety is as much about hockey player's attitude of mind as it is about practical solutions. There is no more potent cure for performance anxiety than the knowledge that one can do it. Learning to control feelings and anxiety through various techniques of relaxation, therapy and the all important preparation of practice can help us as players or performers to triumph over performance anxiety.

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