

GIRIMĀNANDA SUTTA AS AN AUDIO-VISUAL AND MINDFULNESS BREATHING THERAPEUTIC TOOL FOR REDUCING PAIN AND ANXIETY OF DISEASES

C. Abeywardana^{1*}, A.S. Kaluarachchi², K. Hettigoda³

Faculty of Postgraduate Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

²Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

³Department of Psychology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

**chandana_abeywardana@yahoo.com*

Diseases are alarming issues and cause tremendous pain and suffering in living beings in the world. Box breathing is a powerful Western relaxation technique that helps relax the body's unbeatable mind and reduce anxiety. Emerging research is exploring non-invasive and low-cost interventions for diseases. The purpose of reciting *Pirith* is to protect living beings from all disasters, all pains, and all fears. It is believed that the recital of *Pirith* verses is soothing to the nerves and induces mental and physical balance using the six senses of humans. The *Girimānanda Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* contains '*Dasa saññā*' which includes mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing, called *Ānāpānasati*. *Girimānanda* Thera was cured of grave illness after engaging in virtuous behaviour. The objective of this study was to determine the Buddhist ritual performance in healing and promoting physical and mental health issues. The research methodology is a quasi-experimental intervention. Ethical approval was obtained from the research council of the University of Kelaniya. The sample size was 40 subjects who were diagnosed with 2nd and 3rd-stage oral cancer. Oral cancer patients were recruited from oral and maxillofacial units in District General Hospital - Gampaha. Participants were facilitated to hear *Pirith* verses in Low frequency (70Hz-150Hz) using headphones for 35 minutes. Sinhala and English meanings of *Pirith* verses and pictures were displayed on a screen simultaneously. Pain relief reduction of anxiety levels in the individuals was assessed after exposing them to repetitive *Pirith* sounds and vowel sounds (control group) in three sessions (before the intervention, immediately after, three days after, and one week after). Anxiety and stress were assessed using visual analog, DASS, and biological parameters such as blood pressure, pulse, and respiration. Moods were measured using a Mood Barometer in which they were asked to rate their mood (0-10). Results showed a significant improvement in mood (2 to 7) and a reduction in subjective pain (6 to 3) after the intervention. These findings imply that repetitive *Pirith* blessings could be utilized as an effective, non-invasive, non-pharmacological, low-cost audio-visual and mindfulness of inbreathing and out-breathing therapeutic tool.

Keywords: Disease, *Girimānanda Sutta*, reduction of pain and anxiety, therapeutic tool