

Examining the effectiveness of a coping skills intervention for anxiety for junior high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

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The recent COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed school life for Japanese junior high school students (Takasaki, 2022) and led to increased general anxiety among them. This necessitates providing support through school-based coping skills interventions to deal with anxiety. However, there is insufficient research on the effectiveness of such interventions in the context of a pandemic. Therefore, in this study, we examined the effectiveness of a coping skills intervention aimed at teaching Japanese junior high school students how to deal with anxiety during COVID-19.

A total of 369 junior high school students (186 boys and 183 girls) participated in the study. The intervention program had been designed to teach coping skills for anxiety, and was conducted once for 50 minutes. We administered the Japanese version of the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale - Short version (Ishikawa et al., 2018) and the Children's Tri-axial Coping Scale-24 (TAC-24) to junior high and high school students (Masuda et al., 2010) pre- and post-intervention. The protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of the authors' affiliated institution.

The results were analyzed with a paired t-test using time as the independent variable, and anxiety score or TAC-24 score as the dependent variable. The anxiety score factor showed a significant decrease post-intervention compared to pre-intervention ($t(368) = 5.496, p=.001$). The TAC-24 score comprised three factors: support seeking, problem avoidance, and positive interpretation and distraction. Results for the "support seeking" factor showed no significant difference in pre- and post-intervention ($t(368) = .036, p=.971$). However, post-intervention scores for the "problem avoidance" and the "positive interpretation and distraction" factors showed significant increases compared to pre-intervention scores ($t(368) = 2.446, p=.015$; $t(368) = -9.827, p=.001$).

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a coping skills intervention for anxiety among junior high school students in Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic. We found that there was a significant decrease in anxiety scores post-intervention. Additionally, TAC-24 scores also showed significant differences in two factors, namely, "problem avoidance" and "positive interpretation and distraction." This indicates that the students might have actually tried out the coping skills they learned in the intervention, in situations that made them anxious. However, the "support seeking" factor of the TAC-24 had only a small effect. It is possible that the students tried different coping strategies and found that "problem avoidance" and "positive interpretation and distraction" helped them feel better, when living with the anxiety of a disease like COVID-19, on which they had no control. It is important to use different intervention methods depending on the purpose, and the coping skills intervention for anxiety can be beneficial for junior high school students to manage the distress associated with the pandemic.

(447/500words)

Examining the effectiveness of a coping skills intervention for anxiety for junior high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

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Introduction

- The recent COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed school life for Japanese junior high school students (Takasaki, 2022)
- Led to increased general anxiety among Japanese junior high school students.

→ **This necessitates providing support through school-based coping skills interventions to deal with anxiety.**

- However, there is insufficient research on the effectiveness of such interventions in the context of a pandemic.

The purpose of study examined the effectiveness of a coping skills intervention aimed at teaching Japanese junior high school students how to deal with anxiety during COVID-19.



Methods

【Sample】

A total of 369 junior high school students (186 boys and 183 girls)

【Measures】

- Anxiety : the Japanese version of the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale - Short version (Ishikawa et al., 2018)
- Coping : the Children's Tri-axial Coping Scale-24 (TAC-24) to junior high and high school students (Masuda et al., 2010)

【Program】

- The intervention program had been designed to teach coping skills for anxiety, and was conducted once for 50 minutes.

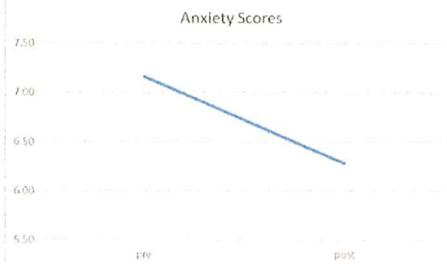


Results

- Time was analyzed in a paired t-test with time as the independent variable and anxiety score or TAC-24 score as the dependent variable.
- The TAC-24 score comprised three factors: support seeking, problem avoidance, and positive interpretation and distraction.

【Anxiety】

The anxiety score factor showed a significant decrease post-intervention compared to pre-intervention ($t(368) = 5.496, p = .001$).



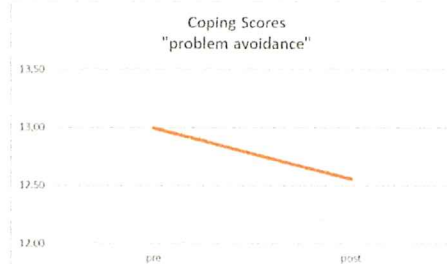
【Coping "support seeking"】

Results for the "support seeking" factor showed no significant difference in pre- and post-intervention ($t(368) = .036, p = .971$).



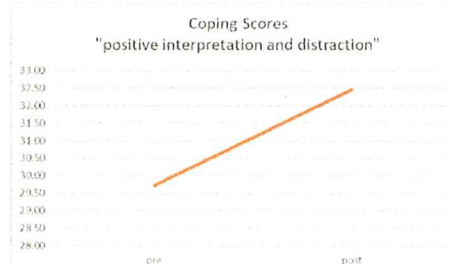
【Coping "problem avoidance"】

The post-intervention scores for the "problem avoidance" factors showed significant increases compared to pre-intervention scores ($t(368) = 2.446, p = .015$).



【Coping "positive interpretation and distraction"】

The post-intervention scores for the "positive interpretation and distraction" factors showed significant increases compared to pre-intervention scores ($t(368) = -9.827, p = .001$).



Discussion

- We found that there was a significant decrease in anxiety scores post-intervention.
 - Additionally, TAC-24 scores also showed significant differences in two factors, namely, "problem avoidance" and "positive interpretation and distraction".
- **This indicates that the students might have actually tried out the coping skills they learned in the intervention, in situations that made them anxious.**
- However, the "support seeking" factor of the TAC-24 had only a small effect.
- **It is possible that the students tried different coping strategies and found that "problem avoidance" and "positive interpretation and distraction" helped them feel better, when living with the anxiety of a disease like COVID-19, on which they had no control.**
- ★ **It is important to use different intervention methods depending on the purpose, and the coping skills intervention for anxiety can be beneficial for junior high school students to manage the distress associated with the pandemic.**

Presenter



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オンライン学会参加体験記

【大会概要】

2022年9月7日から2022年9月10日に開催された、52th European Association For Behavioural And Cognitive Therapiesに参加した。スペインのバルセロナで開催されていたが、新型コロナウイルスの状況に鑑み、オンラインという形で参加した。オンラインでの大会は、サイトからセッションを選び、アクセスすることで参加することができた。ポスター発表は、大会期間中はいつでも閲覧できるよう貼り出されており、メールで質問することが可能だった。そのため、時間を気にすることなく、自分の研究と関連がある研究や、その他興味のある研究のポスターを見ることができた。

【発表内容の概要】

“Examining the effectiveness of a coping skills intervention for anxiety for junior high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic”という題目でポスター発表を行った。本研究は、コロナ禍で中学生を対象とした不安に対するコーピングの拡充を目的とした介入の効果を検討した。結果として、不安の得点は有意に減少し、コーピングの問題回避得点、肯定的な解釈と気晴らし得点は有意に増加したが、サポート希求は有意な差はみられなかった。このことから、コロナ禍など自分でコントロールできない状況では、問題回避や肯定的解釈や気晴らしが有効であることが明らかとなり、目的に応じて介入方法を使い分けることが重要であることが示唆された。

【体験記】

ポスター発表は、大会期間中はいつでも見ることができるようになっていた。国際学会であったため、結果などグラフを用いて、視覚的にわかるように工夫した。また、口頭で補足の説明ができなかったため、説明がなくても理解できるよう工夫を行った。大会期間中はいつでも見ることができシステムであったため、自分の興味のある多くの研究を学ぶことができた。

対面で参加することができなかったため、現地の雰囲気を感じたり、参加している先生方と気軽に交流することは難しかった。しかし、オンラインだったからこそ、わからないことをすぐに調べることができ、内容を理解しながら参加することができたと考える。

初めて国際学会に参加し、自分の研究を発信することができ、大きな自信につながった。今後も、国際学会での発表にチャレンジしていきたい。また、今度は現地で参加している先生方とコミュニケーションをとりながら学会に参加したいと思った。この経験を今後の研究および臨床活動に活かしていきたい。

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