Literature Review: Implications of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on Anxiety in Schizophrenic Patients

Schizophrenia often causes emotional disturbances such as anxiety and depression, which are common mental health problems. Third-wave cognitive therapy such as ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) in treating anxiety disorders, depression, and anxiety is a practical choice. This literature review aims to identify, evaluate, and synthesize the literature on acceptance and commitment therapy and its application to anxiety in patients with schizophrenia. It also integrates knowledge and experience with the medical literature. The method used is a systematic literature review by analyzing several articles using electronic databases, including ProQuest, Google Scholar, and PubMed. The results of ten selected journal articles demonstrate that ACT is effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. ACT is effective at treating symptoms of anxiety and depression, and ACT is more effective at treating symptoms of depression than any other available treatment.

Kata kunci: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT); Cemas; Skizofrenia.

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INTRODUCTION

One type of mental disorder is schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is one of the most severe psychopathological disorders. Significant disturbances in thought, emotion, and behavior characterize a psychotic disorder. The psychotic disorder is associated with social stigma, impairment in life domains (e.g., work and social functioning), and underlying delusional symptoms. Psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia are found in about 3.5% of the population. Schizophrenia is associated with significant disabilities worldwide, affecting education and performance (Yıldız, E, 2020).

According to research results published in the literature, pharmacotherapy (antipsychotics). Used to treat schizophrenia did not lead to a clinically significant increase in side effects. Furthermore, cognitive symptoms and about 50% of patients do not respond to therapy. Therefore, pharmacological and psychosocial approaches are proposed to be used together to treat psychotic disorders. From a psychosocial approach to people diagnosed with psychotic disorders, psychological counseling, psychoeducation, and therapy, in general, can be structured individually or in groups. (Yıldız, E, 2020).

Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health problems, according to the latest estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) by Coto-Lesmes, R et al. (2020). 4.4 percent of the world's population suffers from depression, and 3.6 percent from anxiety, which is more common in women. Moreover, the two problems often coexist, with comorbidity of more than 50% (Kircanski et al., 2017). The world's largest health organization (WHO 2013 in Coto-Lesmes, R, et al. (2020) argues that the public health system facilitates access to effective nursing care. One of the interventions that have proven helpful in treating emotional disorders is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Hayes et al., 2006).

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a third-generation cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) that best treats psychotic disorders. ACT is registered with the Society for Clinical Psychology as an empirically supported psychotherapy for treating several psychiatric conditions, including psychosis. (Yıldız, E, 2020). ACT aims to reduce the intensity and tension associated with psychosis by using specific strategies to avoid the experience.

The basic principles of the ACT are used as the basis for handling self-acceptance, awareness, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in psychotherapy transpersonal. In ACT, self-observation is a part of oneself that can be observed physically and spiritually, or called "alertness." Alertness in everything, including thinking, feeling, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, and doing something (Dewi, 2015). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) helps patients accept situations and events that make them misbehave so that patients must be committed to changing their behavior to prevent a recurrence (Hayati, 2022).

This literature review analyzes studies published in the last ten years investigating the usability of the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy group (ACT) for anxiety and depression. This timeframe was selected because of the need for more previously published studies, which have been included in another review.

METHOD

Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram
The process of selecting research articles in this literature review uses the PRISMA method with four stages, as illustrated in Figure 1. The first stage is the identification stage, where the authors combine research articles from all search sources in the database. The second stage is screening; at this stage, the authors select based on the title and abstract of the research article according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Titles and abstracts considered by the inclusion criteria are still included, while those that do not comply will be excluded. The third stage is the inclusion stage; at this stage, the authors again carry out the selection with full text while still adjusting to the inclusion criteria: 1) the population or sample focuses on patients who receive Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT); 2) research conducted in various countries; 3) articles in English or Indonesian. Articles are excluded with four stages, as illustrated in Figure 1. The first stage is the identification stage, where the authors combine research articles from all search sources in the database. The second stage is screening; at this stage, the authors select based on the title and abstract of the research article according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Titles and abstracts considered by the inclusion criteria are still included, while those that do not comply will be excluded. The third stage is the inclusion stage; at this stage, the authors again carry out the selection with full text while still adjusting to the inclusion criteria: 1) the population or sample focuses on patients who receive Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT); 2) research conducted in various countries; 3) articles in English or Indonesian. Articles are excluded with complete text form; 2) the article is duplicated in the title; 3) the independent variables are the same so that at this stage, research articles are obtained that are genuinely appropriate and relevant to the topic and title of the research for systematic review or review.

**RESULT**

Ten articles selected consisted of seven articles that discussed how ACT could reduce anxiety and depression. The seven articles are research conducted by Ardhani et al. (2020), Clarke et al. (2020), Dhamayanti et al. (2019), Ferreira et al. (2022), Hoffmann et al. (2020), Kelson et al. (2019), Yıldız, (2020); three articles discussing how ACT applied to groups. The three articles are research conducted by Coto-Lesmes et al. (2020), Novisari et al. (2021), and Angela et al. (2021).

**Table 1. Literature Review Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Angela, I. et al. (2021).</td>
<td>Efektivitas Penerapan Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): Sebuah Tinjauan Sistematik.</td>
<td>Looking at the comparison of the effectiveness of ACT implementation from previous researchers, it is good. Given individually or in groups</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>ACT is an effective treatment that is easier to find than previous studies that have shown no effect or less effective treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ardhani, A.N. et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Pengaruh Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Terhadap Penurunan Kecemasan pada Perempuan Korban Kekerasan Seksual</td>
<td>Reducing anxiety in victims of violence by using the ACT method</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>ACT has been shown to increase psychological flexibility and acceptance. Anxiety is reduced as a result of ACT administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clarke, LK. et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Examining a Group Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Intervention for Music Performance Anxiety in Student Vocalists</td>
<td>Investigate whether group-based ACT can be a feasible and effective intervention for MPA in Australian student vocalists and aims to design interventions that music education providers can adopt.</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>Psychological flexibility increased significantly, MPA, and psychological inflexibility significantly decreased. Gains were maintained at a 3-month follow-up. This study provides preliminary evidence of the feasibility and effectiveness of a group-based ACT protocol for musicians with performance anxiety that can be incorporated into performance education curricular in higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coto-Lesmes, R. et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in group format for anxiety and depression. A systematic review</td>
<td>Analyzing published studies on therapeutic use Acceptance and Commitment, applied as a group, in the treatment of anxiety and depression</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Patients who received the intervention in acceptance and commitment therapy demonstrated better emotional states and greater psychological flexibility than patients in the no-medication control group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the article search flowchart or PRISMA diagram, 2,808 articles from several databases at the identification stage. In the second stage, namely the screening stage, a review of the titles and abstracts of the articles and 330 articles were found that matched the inclusion criteria. In the third stage, namely the included stage, a full-text review was carried out, and an assessment of the quality of the articles was obtained from 10 articles. The description of 10 of these articles has the same goal, namely the benefits of ACT in reducing anxiety.

The search for research articles in this literature review uses international and national electronic databases of ProQuest, Google Scholar, and PubMed. Next, several articles were selected according to the title related to the effect of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on anxiety in schizophrenia patients, with a research article publication period ranging from 2019 - 2023 (last five years). The search uses several keywords. The keywords are adjusted to the topic and title of the literature review, namely: 1) acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) (psychiatric specialist therapy), combined with 2) anxiety (diagnosis of risk of mental disorders) and schizophrenia (mental health) with the terms of the search keywords found in the title or abstract of the article. The e-literature used is several ten journals originating from national and international journals.
DISCUSSION

This literature review shows that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is very useful in reducing anxiety. Kelson et al. (2019) said that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) has many advantages, one of which is that it can be an effective and acceptable treatment for adults with symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder. Clarke et al. (2020) state that anxiety can be reduced after Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). However, it cannot be maintained for more than three months if not carried out, considering the surrounding environmental conditions that can affect anxiety recurrence.

In another quote, Yildiz, E (2020) said that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is an alternative treatment outside of pharmacotherapy for psychotic disorders and can also be used by nurses or doctors as a rational approach. This follows the opinion of Hoffman et al. (2021) that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is effective and acceptable for improving general health anxiety and mental health. This research will help develop viable and accessible treatment options for patients with health problems often at risk of going undiagnosed and untreated. One example of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) therapy is mindfulness, where this therapy can reduce anxiety because it uses health and cognitive principles (Dhamayanti, TP, & Yudiarso, A. (2020)). In addition, this Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can be performed in a group setting to treat anxiety and depressive symptoms in working-age adults with mental or physical health (Ferreira et al., 2022).

In line with Angela et al. (2021), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can be implemented face-to-face (offline) between therapists and clients individually or in groups. Novisari and Nurul (2021) say that a program using the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) approach can effectively reduce anxiety and increase the psychological flexibility of 10th-grade high school students, such as accepting feelings and thoughts in facing challenges by limiting thoughts and feelings giving space to these feelings and thoughts, realizing the situation they were in, and then reminding the youth to refocus on the goals they want to achieve. A study by Ardhani and Nawangsih (2020) said that victims of sexual violence were found to experience high levels of stress; apart from the implementation process, which gave much advice, victims of violence were also found to have feelings of anger. Administration of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) increases acceptance and reduces anxiety.

According to the author, several existing research results prove that ACT is a solution to help overcome anxiety and depressive symptoms. ACT is an effective therapy and easier to find.

CONCLUSION

The literature review illustrates the influence of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on reducing anxiety and depression in schizophrenic patients. Based on data extraction from the ten articles included in this literature review, it was found that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) affects individuals with anxiety. It is hoped that the results of this literature review can be used as learning material for hospitals in reducing anxiety levels in schizophrenic patients to improve nursing care to increase patient recovery in hospitals. Further research is expected to investigate the optimal duration or frequency of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) sessions for individuals with schizophrenia and comorbid anxiety.

REFERENCES


Coto-Lesmes, R., Fernández-Rodríguez, C., &


