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**The effect of relaxation exercises on reducing insomnia and enhancing the quality of sleep in elderly people living in selected elders' homes in the Colombo District**

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Late life insomnia is associated with various physical and psychological conditions. Hence, it warrants particular attention. This study aimed to find out the impact of relaxation exercises on reducing insomnia and enhancing the quality of sleep in an elderly population.

A controlled experimental study design was used in this study. A convenience sample of 98 (84 females) elders, aged over 65 years, from two elders' homes in the Colombo District was recruited for the study. A programme of progressive muscular relaxation and deep breathing was conducted on the experimental group for a period of 12 weeks. The control group did not receive any intervention. Pre- and post-intervention data were collected using the Sinhala version of Athens Insomnia Scale (AIS). Independent sample T-tests and the paired sample T-tests were performed. The AIS scores of the experimental group and the control group before the intervention were 15 (SD = 2.67) and 15.76 (SD = 2.96), respectively. The difference between these two groups was not statistically significant. After the intervention, mean AIS scores of the experimental group and the control group were 13.6 (SD = 2.76) and 15.74 (SD = 2.89), respectively, where the difference was statistically significant. When considering the experimental group, its pre- and post-intervention mean AIS scores were 15 (SD = 2.67) and 13.6 (SD = 2.76), respectively, and this difference was statistically significant. Hence, this study indicated a significant reduction in the level of insomnia and increased level of the quality of sleep among a group of elders who followed a relaxation exercise programme. A limitation of this study is the non-validated though Sinhala translated version of the AIS. Further large scale research, using cross-culturally validated AIS, on larger sample sizes is recommended to investigate this area of study further.

**Keywords:** Insomnia, quality of sleep, relaxation exercises, elders, elders' homes, Athens insomnia scale