



Shinrin-Yoku Study: Traditional Hypertension Treatment in Kemuning Tea Plantation with Cultural Resilience and Legal Aspects Approach

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Abstract. This study aims to explore Shinrin-Yoku model therapy as an alternative treatment for hypertension in Kemuning Tea Plantation and to link it with traditional medicine as a form of cultural resilience. Shinrin-Yoku, which incorporates natural elements to improve physical and mental health, is integrated with traditional medicine practices that the community has long maintained. This research also reviews aspects of legal protection related to the legality of traditional medicine in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive method, interviews were conducted with 30 patients at Wira Medika Clinic. The results showed that the combination of Shinrin-Yoku and traditional medicine has a positive impact on the management of hypertension. In addition, it was found that clearer legal regulations are needed to protect and recognize traditional medicine practices as part of the national health system.

Keywords: Shinrin-Yoku, traditional medicine, hypertension, legal protection.

1 Introduction

Shinrin-Yoku, known as “forest bathing,” is a wellness practice that originated in Japan in the 1980s. The therapy invites individuals to have direct contact with nature, specifically forests, as a form of relaxation and health restoration (Li, 2010). Research shows that interacting with the natural environment through Shinrin-Yoku can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and boost the immune system (Park, 2014). As a nature-based therapy, Shinrin-Yoku is in line with traditional medicine practices that use nature as a source of healing.

In the context of traditional medicine, many cultures around the world have used medicinal plants, fresh air, and other natural elements as part of the natural healing process. For example, the use of herbal plants to treat various ailments is an integral part of the medical tradition in Asia, including Indonesia (Pieroni, 2005). This merging

of Shinrin-Yoku with traditional nature-based medicine practices creates a profound synergy between mental and physical health supported by the natural environment.

With the increasing stresses of modern life and chronic diseases such as hypertension, interest in nature-based alternative therapies, such as Shinrin-Yoku and traditional medicine, is growing (Hartig & Mitchell, 2019). Both approaches offer a more environmentally friendly and sustainable method of addressing various health issues without significant side effects, making them an attractive option in holistic healthcare.

1.1 Human and Nature Concerning Health in the Perspective of Law in Indonesia

Humans and nature are inseparably connected, as both need each other to survive. Health is the right of every living being, and this is also reflected in the Indonesian constitution. Article 28 H and Article 34 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution state that every citizen has the right to health services, while the state should provide them (Undang-Undang Dasar pasal 28, 1945). Every individual has the right to live a healthy life physically, mentally, and socially, and to obtain safe and affordable health services to realize the highest degree of health. Health Law No. 17 of 2023 regulates various aspects and health systems in Indonesia. One that is regulated is traditional health services, which are divided into two categories: services that use skills, and services that use herbs (Undang-Undang Nomor 17 tentang Kesehatan, 2023).

Furthermore, Article 161 of Health Law No. 17 of 2023 states that traditional health services include promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and/or palliative aspects (Undang-Undang Nomor 17 tentang Kesehatan, 2023). The community is also given the freedom to develop, improve, and use traditional health services that are safe and accountable. One of the objectives of health law is to protect the interests of patients, as well as to increase awareness, willingness, and ability to live a healthy life for all citizens to achieve an optimal degree of public health (Undang-Undang Nomor 17 tentang Kesehatan, 2023).

Traditional health services, which have the aim of treating and curing, do not rule out the potential economic benefits that can be obtained (Amperawati, 2018). Government Regulation No. 28 of 2024 in Article 479 explains that traditional health services are services carried out based on knowledge, expertise, and values sourced from local wisdom (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 28 tentang Kesehatan, 2024). Shinrin Yoku, or forest bathing therapy, is one form of traditional therapy that complies with Article No.481(1), which states that traditional health services are performed using skills, such as mindfulness therapy and energy therapy (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 28 tentang Kesehatan, 2024). Traditional health workers involved in these therapies must have knowledge and skills acquired through formal education (Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 28 tentang Kesehatan, 2024).

There is a need to increase public awareness of the importance of self-health. This awareness is closely related to the concept of mindfulness, which refers to an individual's alertness and awareness of their state of health. Research shows that mindfulness can produce positive effects on individual health (Williams, 2017). Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights also affirms that everyone has the right to live, to survive, and to improve their standard of living. Everyone also has the right to live in peace, security,

happiness, and prosperity, and is entitled to a good and healthy environment (Undang-Undang Nomor 39 tentang Hak Asasi Manusia, 1999). The state is obliged to ensure the fulfillment of these human rights for all its citizens, without exception, to create a just and prosperous society (Wahyati, 2020).

1.2 Prevalence of Hypertension in the World and Indonesia and the Health Benefits of Natural Therapies

Hypertension or high blood pressure is increasingly becoming a serious health problem worldwide. Based on data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of adults suffering from hypertension has almost doubled in the last 30 years, from 650 million people in 1990 to 1.3 billion people in 2019 (Organization, 2024). Today, nearly one in three adults in the world suffer from hypertension. In men under the age of 50 years, the rate of hypertension is higher than that of women, but above the age of 50 years, the rate is almost equal between men and women (Organization, 2024). Hypertension is the number one cause of death in the world, with many cases caused by essential hypertension, which is high blood pressure of unknown cause (Kemenkes, 2023). The disease increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, and damage to other organs such as the kidneys. Therefore, controlling hypertension is essential to prevent a variety of more serious health problems.

In Indonesia, hypertension is also a big problem. Data from 2024 recorded that there were 18,311 people (32.87%) diagnosed with hypertension only from January to April (Kemenkes, 2023). Hypertension in Indonesia is also the fourth highest cause of death, with a mortality rate of 10.2% (Kemenkes, 2023). In addition, hypertension accounts for 22.2% of disability cases caused by non-communicable diseases (Kemenkes, 2023). Although the prevalence of hypertension in Indonesia in 2023 reached 30.8%, this figure decreased compared to previous years (Kemenkes, 2023). This is the result of various government efforts that educate the public about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, such as maintaining salt intake, exercising, and diligently checking blood pressure.

In addition to medical treatment, nature therapy can also help control hypertension. Nature therapy, also known as Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing), has long been known to benefit mental and physical health. When we are in nature, such as hearing insects, smelling the scent of wood, and breathing in fresh air, we feel calmer and more relaxed (Kemenkes, 2023). This calm mental state can help lower blood pressure, reduce stress, and improve quality of life. The increasing cases of hypertension worldwide, including in Indonesia, require more serious treatment. Besides relying on medications, a healthy lifestyle and nature therapy can be additionally effective ways to help manage hypertension, as well as prevent its adverse effects in the future.

1.3 Practice of Shinrin-Yoku Model Therapy in Kemuning Tea Plantation as Nature-Based Traditional Medicine

Indonesia, a country with one of the third largest tropical forests in the world after Brazil and the Republic of Congo, has various natural areas suitable for nature therapy.

various groups, including people with hypertension. A study showed that Shinrin-Yoku model therapy can lower blood pressure by reducing the hormone cortisol (stress hormone) and lowering nervous system tension (Miyazaki, 2019). Thus, this therapy is a good alternative to support the treatment of hypertension and other stress-related health disorders.



Fig. 2. Kemuning tea plantation area, 2023
(photography by FLA-SCU)

To implement Shinrin-Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation, several activities can be done as part of the therapy such as, walking slowly while enjoying the surrounding scenery and focusing on the sounds of nature, such as the swish of the wind or the chirping of birds. Breathing in the fresh air from the pollution-free environment of the plantation helps relaxation and increases oxygen flow to the brain (Hansen, 2019). Spending time sitting or standing still in one place while feeling the natural vibrations of the surrounding environment can increase self-awareness and reduce anxiety.

The health benefits of Shinrin-Yoku model therapy are not only felt in the short term but also provide long-term effects (Amperawati, 2018). Research by Hansen et al. (2017) supports that regular Shinrin-Yoku practice can lead to long-term health benefits, such as sustained improvements in cardiovascular health and immune function. By doing this practice consistently, one can experience increased endurance, improved mood, as well as reduced risk of chronic stress-related diseases (Park & al, 2020). In Indonesia, integrating Shinrin-Yoku into traditional nature-based medicine can be an efficient alternative to address mental and physical health issues naturally. Kemuning Tea Plantation offers an ideal environment for the practice of Shinrin-Yoku model therapy, which can support traditional nature-based medicine in Indonesia. This therapy not only provides mental and physical health benefits but can also be used as one of the treatment approaches to lower the risk of diseases such as hypertension. By utilizing the natural resources available at Kemuning Tea Plantation, the Shinrin-Yoku model

can be integrated into traditional therapeutic practices to support the overall health of the community.

2 Method

2.1 Research Design

This research design used descriptive qualitative methods to explore patients' experiences of Shinrin Yoku model therapy conducted in Kemuning tea plantation, Central Java, specifically in the context of hypertension treatment. The study involved in-depth interviews with 30 patients from Klinik Wira Medika who had participated in the therapy. The purpose of the interviews is to understand the effects of the therapy on patients' hypertension management, including the perceived benefits. The data obtained will be thematically analyzed to identify patterns and key themes, then presented in a descriptive report to provide insights into the effectiveness of Shinrin-Yoku model therapy at The Kemuning Plantation in the treatment of hypertension.

2.2 Data Collection

Data collection in this study was conducted through interviews with 30 patients from Klinik Wira Medika who had undergone Shinrin-Yoku therapy in Kemuning tea plantation, Central Java, for the treatment of their hypertension. The interviews are designed to comprehensively explore information regarding the patient's experience during the therapy, including changes in the patient's hypertension condition as well as the benefits felt after practicing Shinrin-Yoku model therapy in Kemuning Tea Plantation. Interviews will be conducted by distributing questionnaires through Google Form links as well as in-person interviews and the transcripts will be analyzed to find research results. This data will provide in-depth insight into the effectiveness of Shinrin-Yoku therapy and patients' perceptions of their hypertension treatment.

2.3 Data Analysis

Interview data were analyzed using the analytical approach of Nancy Scheper-Hughes, 1992, who examines cultural resilience in the context of the relationship between health and cultural identity. Scheper-Hughes examines how medical practices, including traditional nature-based medicine, not only affect physical well-being but also strengthen individuals' cultural identity. Traditional medicine often serves as a way to reinforce cultural values and provide important emotional and spiritual support (Scheper-Hughes, 1992). As such, this analysis identifies how health practices play a role in strengthening cultural resilience, highlighting the role of traditional medicine in maintaining and building people's cultural identity.

3 Findings and Discussion

After describing the background of the research, the theories that have confirmed the research, and the research methods used, this chapter presents the results of the research. The results of the study will be described based on the results of interviews and observations. The discussion in this chapter is obtained through the results of observational data collection and interviews by distributing Google Form link questioners to 30 patients of the Wira Medika Clinic, as well as discussions focused on the problem under study. In this session, it will describe various things regarding the results of interviews conducted at the Wira Medika Clinic.

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Miles and Huberman, 1984 developed a qualitative data analysis method consisting of three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data obtained from field research to produce relevant information. Data presentation involves organizing data in the form of narratives, graphs, or tables to make it easier for researchers to understand patterns and relationships between data. The final stage, conclusion drawing and verification, was conducted to interpret the data and ensure that the conclusions drawn were consistent and valid through a verification process, such as triangulation. These three stages take place simultaneously and iteratively during the data collection and analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1984)

Before processing data from interviews and observations, researchers conducted 10 observations in the Kemuning tea plantation area. This was done to ensure that the research location met the requirements and supported the smooth process of data collection. The observations included an assessment of the environmental conditions, accessibility, as well as feasibility of the location in supporting research that focuses on Shinrin Yoku model therapy in Kemuning Tea Plantation as a traditional treatment method for hypertension. Thus, the researcher was able to ensure that the chosen location was able to provide an optimal environment for this research activity.

This study was conducted on Wednesday-Thursday, August 28-29, 2024 for two days and one night involving 30 patients from Klinik Wira Medika. The patients stayed at Wisma Harjuna which is located close to the Kemuning Tea Plantation area. In the morning, patients were invited to walk around the tea plantation area, enjoying the fresh air and calm natural atmosphere. Afterwards, patients are given the freedom to explore the area around the tea plantation at their own pace. Patients can choose various activities that support health and relaxation, such as leisurely walking, running, meditation, or simply enjoying the natural scenery with a duration of 120 minutes. The purpose of this activity was to give patients the opportunity to experience the benefits of the natural environment first-hand, as part of the Shinrin Yoku Model therapeutic approach at Kemuning Tea Plantation integrated in this study, to see its effect on patients' blood pressure and mental well-being.

The analysis stage carried out by researchers were is to make a list of questions for interviews, collect data, and conduct data analysis conducted by researchers themselves. To be able to find out whether the practice of nature-based traditional medicine

therapy Shinrin Yoku model is effective in treating hypertension, the researchers compiled a list of the interview questions result based on the research focus on the effects felt after doing Shinrin Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation and the Wira Medika Clinic Patient Participation, Interviews conducted by researchers were conducted in a gradual manner from September 3-10, 2024. The results of this study were obtained by in-depth interview techniques and distributing questionnaires through Google Form links with sources from Wira Medika Clinic patients as a form of data search and observation. The results of the interview have been presented in tabular form grouped by patient age range. The following is a table of interview results:

Table 1. Age Range 45 – 50 years

No	Name	Age	Duration of Hypertension	Side effects after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy	Blood pressure level before and after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy
1.	Nia Puspita	45	1 year	More comfortable and less anxious	Before :145/90 After : 130/87
2.	Yuliana	45	3 years	Fit and healthy	Before : 156/92 After : 140/80
3.	Gita Lestari	46	2 years	Less tired	Before :170/100 After : 160/100
4.	Zaki	46	2 years	More refreshed	Before : 165/95 After : 145/90
5.	Dian Sari	48	3 years	Lighter and fresher	Before : 150/ 95 After : 146/83
6.	Andini	50	3 years	Fresh and healthy	Before :175/105 After : 150/95

Based on the above data, it can be concluded that the Shinrin-Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation has a positive impact on hypertensive patients at Wira Medika clinic aged 45 - 50 years. All patients reported good side effects after undergoing therapy, such as feeling more comfortable, refreshed, and less tired. All patients experienced an improvement in physical condition, such as feeling fresher, fitter, and healthier. There was a decrease in blood pressure in all patients after the therapy, indicating that the Shinrin-Yoku model therapy can help control hypertension. Patients felt more comfortable and less anxious after the therapy, which shows the positive impact of this therapy on mental well-being. Overall, Shinrin-Yoku model therapy appears to be effective in helping hypertensive patients reduce blood pressure and improve their quality of life.

Table 2. Age Range 51-55 years

No	Name	Age	Duration of Hypertension	Side effects after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy	Blood pressure level before and after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy
1.	Bella	51	6 years	Comfortable and Stable	Before: 130/85 After : 126/78
2.	Kiki Anggraini	51	3 years	Energized and Vibrant	Before : 137/78 After : 131/75
3.	Uli Malik	53	4 years	More calm	Before : 135/88 After : 125/80
4.	Sari	54	6 years	Relax	Before: 180/90 After : 120/80
5.	Indah Nur	54	5 years	Calm and Fit	Before : 130/85 After : 125/75
6.	Mita Wati	54	5 years	Relaxed and Confident	Before : 142/90 After : 139/85
7.	Putra	54	1,5 years	Peaceful	Before : 136/90 After : 130/85
8.	Fani	55	2 years	Comfortable and sleep better	Before : 135/88 After : 125/80
9.	Rahman	55	4 years	Feel better and less stressed	Before : 180/110 After : 170/97

The Shinrin-Yoku model therapy outcome report shows significant improvements in the blood pressure and physical and mental conditions of the patients. Following the therapy, all patients experienced a reduction in blood pressure, with changes varying depending on their initial condition. In addition, patients reported feeling more comfortable, refreshed, and fit, as well as decreased anxiety and fatigue. The therapy appeared to be effective in improving general well-being, with positive results seen in almost all individuals involved. Patients felt more comfortable and less anxious after undergoing the therapy, indicating the positive impact of this therapy on mental well-being. Overall, Shinrin-Yoku model therapy appears to be effective in helping hypertensive patients reduce blood pressure and improve their quality of life.

Tabel 3. Age Range 56-60 Years old

No	Name	Age	Duration of Hypertension	Side effects after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy	Blood pressure level before and after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy
1.	Vina	56	8 years	More refreshed and comfortable body	Before : 135/88 After : 125/80
2.	Budi Santoso	56	7 years	Relaxed and energetic	Before : 128/90 After : 122/85
3.	Rian Nugroho	57	2 years	Energized	Before : 127/90 After : 125/80
4.	Chandra	57	3 years	Calm	Before : 140/90 After : 135/80
5.	Hadi	57	6,5 years	More relaxed and focused	Before ; 139/92 After : 135/85
6.	Edo Prabowo	57	2 years	Less anxiety	Before : 142/95 After : 135/85
7.	Yudi	58	4,5 years	Improved but still alert	Before : 160/95 After : 130/90
8.	Nova	58	1,5 years	Happy and peaceful	Before : 162/95 After : 145/90
9.	Meiti	59	3 years	Excited	Before :148/95 After : 140/85
10.	Eko Prasetyo	60	6 years	Improvement but still needs more attention	Before : 150/95 After :140/90

From these data, it can be concluded that Shinrin Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation has a positive impact on hypertension patients at Wira Medika Clinic with an age range of 56-60 years, although some patients still need more attention to reduce blood pressure to an optimal level. Most patients felt more refreshed, relaxed, energized, and experienced decreased anxiety after the therapy. Some patients reported feelings of peace, calmness and joy. Even so, in some patients with high initial blood pressure, blood pressure was still above the normal limit after therapy, despite the improvement. Shinrin Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation was effective in reducing blood pressure in most patients, but in some patients with more severe hypertension, further efforts were still needed to achieve healthier blood pressure. Overall, Shinrin Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation had a positive impact on the physical and emotional health of patients, with significant blood pressure reduction results but still required a more intensive approach in some patients.

Table 4. Age range 60 years old and above

No	Name	Age	Duration of Hypertension	Side effects after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy	Blood pressure level before and after Shinrin Yoku Model therapy
1.	Wati	60	1 year	Happy looking at nature	Before : 171/95 After : 124/80
2.	Azaz	61	1 year	Happy heart	Before : 163/90 After : 129/80
3.	Eka Ismono	61	20 years	Peace and tranquility	Before : 157/91 After : 130/85
4.	Menik Mulyani	61	2 years	The body is refreshed	Before : 170/95 After : 150/90
5.	Sutarjo	72	5 years	Happy and calm	Before : 176/105 After : 170/90

Based on the data above, Shinrin-Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation showed a positive impact for elderly hypertension patients of Wira Medika Clinic, although the results varied depending on the severity of hypertension suffered. Patients reported feeling happy, peaceful, pleased, and more refreshed after the therapy. Nature observation seemed to have a positive impact on patients' emotional well-being. All patients experienced a reduction in blood pressure after the therapy. Patients with milder hypertension showed a significant reduction to the normal range. However, patients with more severe hypertension showed a decrease that was still above the normal threshold, although there was still a clear improvement. This therapy is effective for lowering blood pressure, especially in patients with mild to moderate hypertension. However, patients with chronic and severe hypertension require continued efforts to achieve more optimal results. Overall, Shinrin-Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation has a positive impact on elderly patients, both physically and mentally, with significant improvements in blood pressure, especially in those with mild to moderate hypertension.

The above tables show that Shinrin-Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation has a positive impact on hypertensive patients in various age groups. The therapy is effective in lowering blood pressure, improving physical and mental health, and reducing stress and anxiety. The results indicate that Shinrin-Yoku can be used as a nature-based alternative to traditional medicine, with varying effects depending on the severity of hypertension and the age of the patient.

3.1 Connection with Nancy Scheper-Hughes Theory

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, (1992) theory of cultural resilience explains how communities develop adaptation strategies to deal with health challenges through each individual's cultural practices. In the context of this study, Shinrin-Yoku as a nature-based therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation reflects a form of cultural resilience, where local traditional

medicine is adapted to modern health needs. Shinrin-Yoku integrates natural elements as part of the treatment, which not only reflects cultural efforts to preserve traditional practices but also demonstrates adaptation to the changing health needs of the community.

Specifically, the results showed that these therapies not only positively impacted the physical aspects of the patients, but also strengthened emotional well-being which is in line with Scheper-Hughes' idea that cultural resilience involves the adaptation and integration of traditional practices within the broader context of health. However, as outlined, there is a need for clearer legal regulations to support the recognition and protection of traditional medicine practices, which are also part of how cultures adapt to changes in national health systems. Overall, this research underscores the importance of linking nature-based therapies with principles of cultural resilience, while also emphasizing the need for policies that support traditional medicine within existing legal frameworks.

4 Conclusion

This study shows that Shinrin-Yoku therapy, as a form of traditional nature-based medicine, has proven effective in managing hypertension. The implementation of the therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation not only succeeded in lowering blood pressure but also improved the emotional and physical well-being of the patients of Klinik Wira Medika. In the Indonesian legal context, traditional medicine is regulated under laws that support the practice, covering both legal and ethical aspects. Shinrin-Yoku model therapy, with its nature-based approach and cultural resilience, is in line with these regulations and shows potential as a legitimate and effective alternative to traditional medicine. The cultural resilience approach emphasizes the importance of understanding and preserving local practices. Therefore, Shinrin-Yoku model therapy at Kemuning Tea Plantation not only offers health benefits but also supports the preservation of local culture as well as complying with existing legal regulations. This research recommends further integration of Shinrin-Yoku model therapy in Kemuning Tea Plantation in traditional health practices and utilization of its legal aspects to support sustainability as well as wider recognition.

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