

Spiritual Therapy for Patients and Communities Reducing Anxiety during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Background: COVID-19 poses high challenges for society and has a considerable impact. One of the impacts of COVID-19 on patients and society is the emergence of anxiety, so efforts are needed to reduce this anxiety. Spiritual therapy is an alternative that can be used by patients and communities affected by COVID-19.

Purpose: Find specifically about spiritual therapy to reduce anxiety in COVID-19 patients and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: Literature review of international literature using Google Scholar, Proquest, and Taylor & Francis databases. A total of 1,544 articles were identified, of which 995 were duplicates, leaving 549 articles. After screening, 539 articles were excluded due to the lack of full-text availability. The remaining 10 articles were further reviewed, resulting in 5 articles that met the criteria and were included in this study.

Results: Five articles meeting the inclusion criteria. One true experiment article, 2 pre-experiment articles, 1 RCT article, and 1 qualitative article. All articles analyzed are articles published in the range of 2019-2021. Spiritual therapies that can be used to reduce anxiety include Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT), Benson therapy, psychoreligious therapy, mindfulness meditation, and spiritual psychotherapy with an Islamic religious education approach.

Conclusion: COVID-19 has profoundly impacted daily life and created significant challenges for society. However, spirituality serves as an important coping resource to help individuals manage anxiety. Various spiritual therapies such as the SEFT, benson relaxation, psychoreligious therapy, mindfulness meditation, and spiritual psychotherapy based on Islamic teachings have been shown to effectively reduce anxiety and promote mental well-being during the pandemic.

Keywords: anxiety, COVID-19, spiritual therapy

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BACKGROUND

Since the end of December 2019 in Wuhan, China there has been a group of patients with pneumonia whose cause was initially unknown (Zhu et al., 2020), but the cause was quickly confirmed, namely the new coronavirus Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus-2 or known as SARS CoV-2 (Dong et al., 2020). This virus has caused an outbreak of viral pneumonia, which was named *Coronavirus Disease* or COVID-19 (Lv et al., 2020). COVID-19 is now a pandemic occurring in many countries around the world (WHO, 2021a). And has caused an increase in death rates worldwide (Corpuz, 2021). WHO data globally states that there were 259,502,031 positive confirmed cases of COVID-19 with a death toll of 5,183,003 people as of November 26 2021 (WHO, 2021b). Meanwhile in Indonesia there were 4,255,268 positive confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 143,796 deaths as of November 25 2021 (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic presents physical and economic challenges and many people suffer from feelings of uncertainty, fear of infection, moral stress and sadness that are often experienced in isolation, increased worry and anxiety that arise both individually and collectively as a long-term impact. length of the COVID-19 pandemic (Peteet, 2020). Statement made by Peteet (2020) is anxiety caused by COVID-19 requires optimal self and mental care which can be accessed through health services. Research conducted by Lee (2020) explains the unique manifestations of individuals experiencing coronavirus anxiety specifically including cognitive dimensions, namely repetitive thinking, worrying, processing biases, dreaming, planning; from the behavioral dimension, namely irrational thinking, convulsive behavior; from the emotional dimension, namely the presence of fear, anxiety, anger and physiological disorders such as sleep disorders, somatic stress and tonic immobility. The report submitted by Cullen et al (2020) reported that from a general population survey in China that 28.8% of those surveyed reported moderate to severe anxiety symptoms, and 16.5% reported moderate to severe depression symptoms.

Spirituality has played a role in health care for centuries, but technological advances in diagnosis and treatment have eclipsed the more human elements of health care delivery in the early 20th century (Southard, 2020). Statement made by Southard (2020), spirituality is a dynamic and intrinsic aspect of humanity through which a human seeks meaning, purpose and highest transcendence, in carrying out relationships with oneself, family, other people, community, society, nature, significant or sacred and expresses it through beliefs, values, traditions and practices. So it requires the integration of spiritual care in holistic care and health care which has long been considered the best practice to promote optimal healing (Scott Barss, 2020).

COVID-19 has significantly changed the normal way of life and brought great challenges to society, but spirituality can be a resource for people to overcome stress (Del Castillo, 2021). Spiritual care relates to providing compassion and empathy during periods of stress, distress and anxiety that increase during treatment (Roman et al., 2020). Many nurses around the world believe that supporting patients' spiritual well-being is an important component of holistic patient-centred nursing (Mamier et al., 2019). So a health professional needs to think about how to meet the patient's spiritual needs and overcome obstacles in providing spiritual care (Chen et al., 2018). This is necessary because the application of spirituality is recommended as a therapy to reduce anxiety (Akanni et al., 2021).

COVID-19 is a viral infection that mainly causes problems with the respiratory system. and is transmitted through respiratory droplets and through close contact (Lv et al., 2020). Most people infected with COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate respiratory symptoms and can recover without requiring special treatment (Del Castillo, 2021). But this COVID-19

infection can also develop serious symptoms, especially in older people and in people who have previous health problems. One of the psychological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is the emergence of anxiety for patients being treated for COVID-19, for society in general and for students (Scott Barss, 2020). The application of spirituality is recommended as a therapy to reduce anxiety. Based on matter that, then formulation problem in paper This What are the spiritual therapies that can be applied to reduce anxiety in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic?.

OBJECTIVE

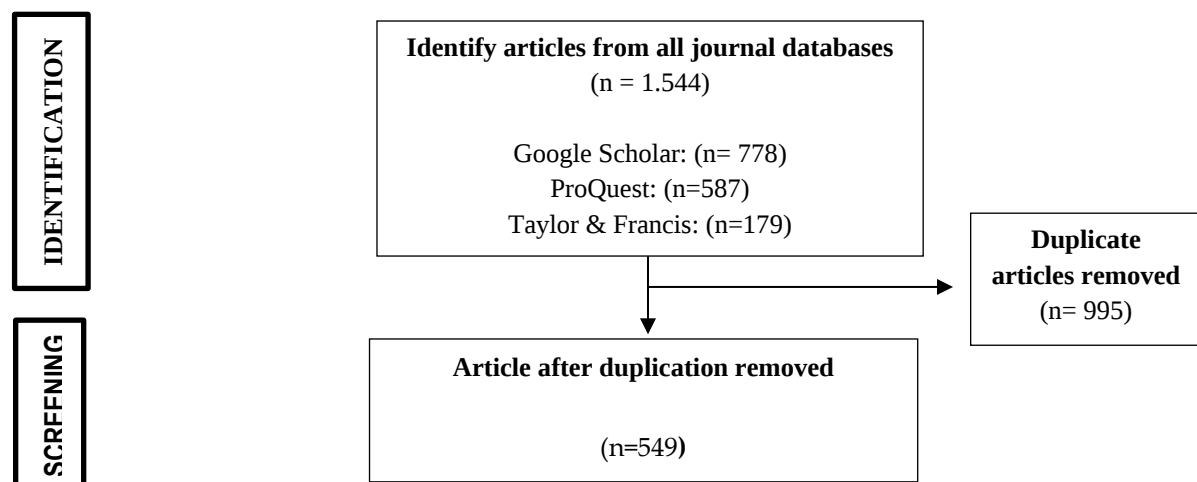
The purpose of writing this literature review is to find out the specifics of spiritual therapy to reduce anxiety in COVID-19 patients and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

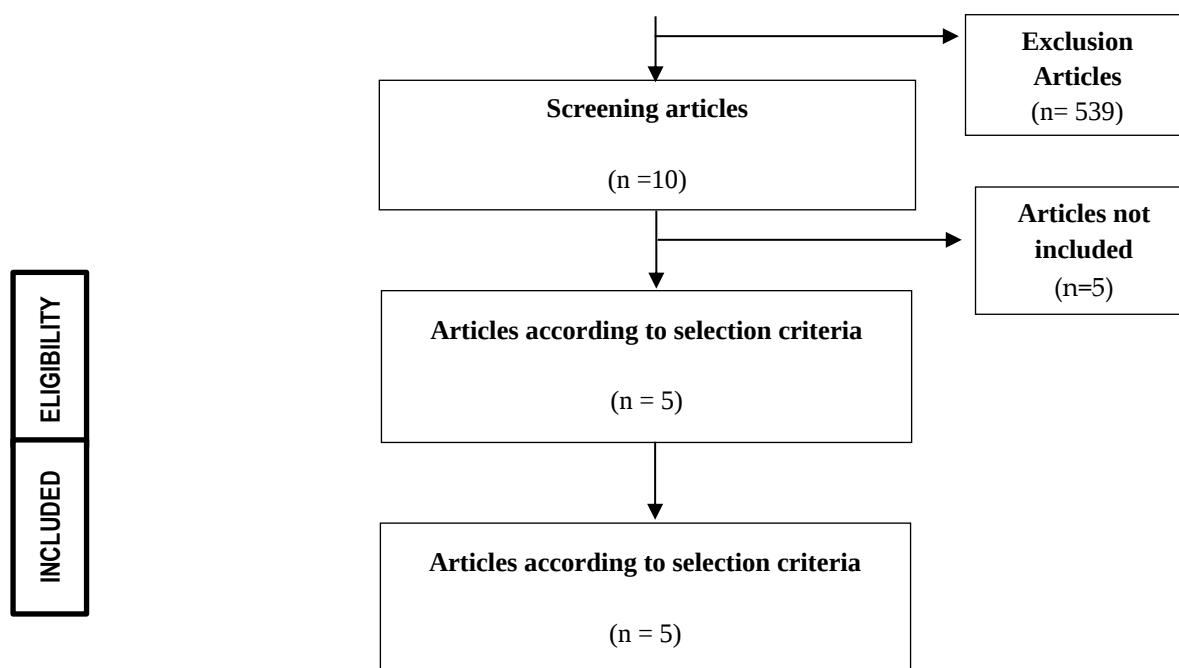
METHODS

The method used in writing this article is a literature review, namely an international literature search carried out using the Google Scholar, ProQuest, and Taylor and Francis databases. Article searches were carried out using PICO with the keywords "COVID-19 Patient AND Community Anxiety due to the Impact of Pandemic COVID-19 AND Spiritual Care OR Spiritual therapy AND Reducing Anxiety ".

Of the 1,544 articles, 995 were duplicates, leaving 549 articles. A total of 549 articles were then screened and from the screening results, 539 articles were excluded because there were no full text articles available (not fully accessible), the type of article did not meet the criteria (RCT, true experiment, pre-experiment , and qualitative) and the screening results were poor. There are 10 articles remaining. The remaining articles were then selected according to the criteria, namely those that discussed clearly and specifically about spiritual therapy for patients and communities affected by COVID-19, namely 5 articles, which were then carried out a literature review.

The inclusion criteria in this literature review are articles published in the 2019-2021 period, articles in Indonesian and English, full text . Articles that are in accordance with the objectives to be achieved (screened from title, abstract and full text) which contain spiritual therapy interventions or spiritual care to reduce anxiety in the pandemic era in COVID-19 patients and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with an RCT design, Pre and True Experiments and qualitative research. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria in this literature review are all forms of review papers , articles with interventions that are less focused on spiritual therapy for COVID-19 patients and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.





RESULTS

Five articles met the inclusion criteria. One article is a true experiment, 2 articles are pre-experiments, 1 article is an RCT while the other is a qualitative article. All articles analyzed were articles published in the 2019-2021 period (Table 1).

Table 1. Results of Literature Study

Author & Year	Research Title	Research methods	Research Instrument	Forms of Intervention	Results
Kurnianingsih et al (2021)	Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) Berpengaruh Terhadap Kecemasan dan Motivasi Sembuh Pasien COVID-19	True Experiment with a Pre-Post test control group design approach	The anxiety measuring tool uses HARS and the level of motivation to recover using the recovery motivation questionnaire	This research used the SEFT intervention which was carried out 5 times for 5 days	Data analysis used the Wilcoxon and Mann Whitney tests. There were differences in levels of anxiety ($p = 0.000$) and motivation to recover ($p = 0.000$) after the Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) intervention

						n was carried out on COVID-19 patients at the Probolinggo City Quarantine House. Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) can reduce anxiety levels and increase motivation to recover from COVID-19 patients
Setiyawan et al (2021)	Pendamping an Pasien Isolasi Mandiri Covid-19 di UM Surabaya Melalui Psychoreligi us Care	Pre experiment with a One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design approach	Google Form contains personal identity, and screening for psychological conditions consists of an anxiety and stress questionnaire and a zoom meeting application	This research provides intervention in the form of coaching through Zoom Meetings every day during self-isolation at 09.30-10.30 WIB, with lecturer mentors from the Faculty of Islamic Religion and the Faculty of Health Sciences. Psychoreligi us care development in the form of tausiah,	The results of mentoring and screening obtained data that 1) Covid-19 patients experience anxiety while undergoing self-isolation to varying degrees. 2) After providing psychoreligi us care assistance for 14 days, there was a decrease in anxiety levels by 82.86%. The	

				motivation and joint prayer. Coaching is carried out using presentation methods, questions and answers, games which can certainly be fun and entertaining Isoman participants.	mentoring activities are going well and there is still a need for continued mentoring considering that there are 17.14% of isoman patients who need a longer duration of time to overcome the anxiety or stress conditions that occur to them.
Abdurrouf et al (2021)	Terapi Relaksasi Benson Untuk Menurunkan Tingkat Kecemasan Pada Forum Kesehatan Keluarga (Fkk) Kelurahan Bandarharjo Kota Semarang	Pre-experiment with the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design approach	The Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS) instrument can determine the level of anxiety	This research uses intervention in the form of Benson therapy. The intervention began with an explanation of Benson relaxation therapy and continued with a simulation of Benson relaxation therapy and respondents were asked to practice it for 1 week and then a post test was carried out to determine the respondent's	Members of the family health forum in Bandarharjo subdistrict can know and be able to practice the Benson relaxation technique, Benson relaxation technique can reduce the anxiety level of members of the family health forum in Bandarharjo subdistrict,

				anxiety level after Benson relaxation therapy.	
Hasina et al (2021)	Mindfulness Meditation Based on Spiritual Care to Reduce Community Anxiety due to the Impact of Pandemic Coronavirus Disease	Randomiz ed Controlled Trial	Instruments: demographic questionnaire and DASS 42 questionnaire	This research is mindfulness meditation combined with spiritual care. This research also wants to emphasize the spiritual care so that the health felt by the community is comprehensiv e health, both physical, mental and spiritual, so that there is an accelerated reduction in anxiety levels.	The average level of anxiety before carrying out the spiritual care-based mindfulness meditation intervention in the intervention group was 17.28 (severe anxiety) and 17.18 in the control group (severe anxiety) with $p = 1,000$, which means there was no difference in the average level of anxiety. anxiety, whereas after being given the intervention the average level of anxiety in the intervention group was 6.03 (normal anxiety) and 18.06 in the control group (severe anxiety) with $p = 0.000$, which means there is a

					difference in the average level of anxiety. anxiety in the intervention group and control group after being given the intervention.
Yono et al (2020)	Psikoterapi Spiritual dan Pendidikan Islam dalam Mengatasi dan Menghadapi Gangguan Anxiety Disorder Disaat dan Pasca Covid 19	Descriptive qualitative	Instruments: not described in this article (data collection: observation, interviews, and documentation studies).	This research uses psychospiritual interventions and Islamic education to determine the role of spiritual psychology and Islamic education in overcoming anxiety during and after the Covid-19 outbreak.	Spiritual psychotherapy by carrying out repentance baths, repentance prayers, and dhikr can increase endorphins in the body, improve self-quality, calm the mind and heart, and can prevent and overcome anxiety disorders .

DISCUSSION

The anxiety that has developed into a concern related to COVID-19 has given rise to recommendations for effective self-care, and requires greater availability of mental health care, and at the same time existential concerns have also emerged due to the pandemic, this shows the importance of resources. spiritual power (Peteet, 2020). Research by Roman et al (2020), spiritual care demonstrated through compassion and empathy puts a person at ease and provides much-needed assistance during periods of increased stress, distress and anxiety. Research by (Kurnianingsih et al., 2021) it was found that Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) was proven to reduce anxiety in COVID-19 patients. Anxiety is generally caused by internal and external factors, which trigger the emergence of self-defense mechanisms in an individual, and these self-defense mechanisms can sometimes actually damage an individual, so to deal with the phenomenon of anxiety it is necessary to handle it psychologically, one of which is by using SEFT (Fadli et al., 2020).

SEFT is a therapeutic technique that uses the energy within oneself to utilize energy points with a certain amount of strength and sequence plus spiritual elements which will provide a relaxing effect and create sincerity, positive acceptance and hope for healing which

will have an impact on reducing feelings of anxiety. experienced and improve a person's psychological well-being so that their health status can be well maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic situation (Sari et al., 2021). The SEFT technique was developed with tailored individual characteristics and is designed to fulfill the inherent spiritual side of each person and underlines that humans are primitive creatures who embrace everyday experiences (Fadli et al., 2020). Previous research states that the success of SEFT in reducing anxiety levels and increasing psychological well-being cannot be separated from the respondent's educational background (Sari et al., 2021). suffered can be well accepted and will be more open to accepting their condition, thereby giving rise to new hope and autonomy which can improve psychological well-being (Elvina, 2020).

Handling anxiety is not only centered on one intervention, apart from SEFT, the intervention to deal with anxiety is with a psychoreligious approach. Psychoreligious therapy is a relaxation technique combined with elements of belief in religion and God, which can increase the relaxation response more strongly than using relaxation techniques alone (Yudono et al., 2019). The aim of providing psychoreligious therapy is to communicate with God and gain peace of mind, this can influence the thought process and stabilize emotions (Dewi et al., 2021). This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Setiyawan et al (2021), it was stated that after providing psychoreligious care assistance with spiritual healing, providing health material, motivation and prayer together for 14 days, it was proven to reduce anxiety levels by 82.86% and was used as coping which could increase enthusiasm and raise physical resilience. experienced while the patient underwent self-isolation.

The next spiritual therapy that can be useful for reducing anxiety is Benson therapy. Benson therapy is a therapy that combines breathing relaxation and belief factors held by the individual (Agustiya et al., 2020). Benson therapy can trigger the body to produce endorphin and encephaline hormones which have a comfortable and calm effect, hemodynamically there will be muscle relaxation, decreased heart rate, vasodilation of blood vessels so that blood pressure can decrease (Pardede & Tarigan, 2020). Research conducted by Abdurrouf et al (2021) stated that Benson therapy carried out for 1 week resulted in reducing anxiety levels. Benson relaxation therapy has an effect which can trigger the brain to emit alpha waves, where these waves have a frequency of 8-12 Hz, namely waves that indicate a person is in a relaxed and relaxed state, when these alpha waves appear in the blood vessels in the body, vasodilation occurs so that blood flow becomes stable and the brain releases hormones endorphins and serotonin so that a person will become calm, happy and comfortable (Suwanto et al., 2020).

The next spiritual therapy is mindfulness meditation , which is a meditation practice that focuses on awareness techniques through relaxation and concentration exercises (Hasina et al., 2021). Mindfulness meditation training had an effect on decreasing adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) in the treatment group compared to the control group and that the Area Under the Curve concentration of the ACTH hormone and inflammatory cytokines experienced an even greater decrease (Hoge et al., 2018). Patients who took an 8-week mindfulness meditation program had fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety, better self-control and higher well-being (Greeson et al., 2018) . Spiritual care through a supportive approach and religious rituals in the form of prayers, calls to prayer, prayers, listening to the Qur'an, reading tawasul prayers, and spiritual guidance by imams for religions other than Islam can increase patient resilience to mental health crises (Alang, 2021). Meditation combined with spiritual care will be able to speed up recovery from an illness, improve spiritual health and control anxiety, especially in society during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hasina et al., 2021).

Spiritual psychotherapy and Islamic religious education can also reduce anxiety. Psychotherapy is a treatment effort by a therapist towards a client by involving psychoanalysis for the client's well-being in understanding themselves (Buchanan & Haslam, 2019). Spiritual

psychotherapy can improve a person's relationship with God (Saadeh et al., 2018). Islamic education is efforts to educate Islam in a planned manner through experience, knowledge, skills and skills so that students can know, understand, appreciate and believe in Islamic teachings. Research by Yono et al (2020) states that spiritual psychotherapy using repentance baths, repentance prayers and dhikr performed by individuals experiencing anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic is able to increase endorphins in the body, improve self-quality, calm the mind and heart , and is able to prevent and reduce anxiety.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has significantly changed the normal way of life and brought great challenges to society, but spirituality can be a resource for people to overcome anxiety. Spiritual care is concerned with providing compassion and empathy during periods of increased stress, distress and anxiety while in care. Many nurses around the world believe that supporting patients' spiritual well-being is an important component of holistic, patient-centered nursing. Spiritual therapies that can be used to reduce anxiety include Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT), Benson therapy, psychoreligious therapy, mindfulness meditation, and spiritual psychotherapy with an Islamic religious education approach.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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