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# Caring for the Mental Health of Patients at Aisyiyah Hospital through Spiritual Guidance

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## Abstract

Caring for the mental health of patients receiving treatment in hospitals is an urgent matter to be implemented. This research discusses the process of spiritual guidance for patients, therefore the aim of this study is to analyze the process of spiritual guidance in caring for the mental health of patients at Aisyiyah Hospital during their stay in the hospital. This study is a qualitative research. Data collection was done through observation, interviews, and documentation. In this case, information was sought from the spiritual guidance department. The data analysis used in this study was through data reduction, data display, and verification. The research result shows that the role of spiritual guidance for patients at the hospital is an important activity to be implemented as it can accelerate the healing process when patients have a healthy mindset. The challenges faced by the spiritual guidance department can be minimized by collaborating with religious organizations that have many experts in the field of religion, taking into account the expertise of these experts.

Keywords: mental health, patients, spiritual guidance

## Introduction

Many verses of the Quran explain that every human being will experience the trials of life, hunger, sadness, and even be afflicted with a disease. One of them is explained in Surah al-'Ankabut verses 2-3, "*We believe,*" *that they will be left without being put to the test? We certainly tested those before them. And 'in this way' Allah will*

*clearly distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are liars*". A sick person will experience anxiety, restlessness, and their mental condition will be disturbed, which can even lead to prolonged depression.

Illness is generally defined as an abnormal or unusual condition in a person. Illness is a condition where a person's physical, emotional, intellectual, social, developmental, or abilities are reduced or disrupted, not just the occurrence of a disease process. When viewed from a biological approach, illness is expressed in relation to the body that carries out biological functions and can be clearly distinguished between sickness and health. When viewed from a medical approach, a person's illness, physically, spiritually, and socially, has the ability to develop and utilize themselves. Humans will function properly. Illness is not just a physical deviation but a disturbance in fully functioning as a human being (Irwan, 2017).(Irwan, 2017)

Studies on the mental health conditions of patients have been discussed previously, some of which are the research by Riyadi (Riyadi, 2022) which describes the psychological conditions of stroke patients in general, such as experiencing shock, anxiety, stress, and withdrawing from social life. Similarly, the research by Arifin and Satriah shows that the mental and spiritual needs of inpatients in various hospitals are generally in a state of spiritual deficit and some experience spiritual distress. Spiritual deficit is characterized by patients experiencing self-imbalance due to a lack of spiritual intake, which manifests in negative and positive statements and attitudes from the patients (Arifin & Satriah, 2018). Furthermore, the research by Ningsih and Thahura shows that patients with diabetes mellitus experience stress and poor sleep quality (Ningsih & Thahura, 2022). The research revealed by Lutfi and Lutfi shows that in various hospitals in the Jabodetabek area and its surroundings when someone experiences a physical disorder that requires them to seek treatment at a hospital (as a patient), they will experience psychological/mental disturbances and pressures (Lutfi & Lutfi, 2022).(Riyadi, 2022)(Arifin & Satriah, 2018)(Ningsih & Thahura, 2022)(Lutfi & Lutfi, 2022)

Several studies have shown that individuals who are ill often experience mental instability, psychological pressure, prolonged stress, and inadequate quality of rest, all of which can lead to poor mental health. There are at least two possible actions that individuals with mental disorders may take. Firstly, they may immediately realize the

issue and seek medical treatment while also getting closer to Allah. Secondly, they may turn to forbidden activities by religion, such as consuming alcohol or drugs, and so on. If left unaddressed, these issues can have broader social impacts. Therefore, it is crucial to promptly address imbalances in one's mental state to prevent prolonged illness. In addition to medical treatment, the role of spiritual guidance in hospitals is equally important in caring for the mental health of patients. Based on this perspective, the mental health care of inpatients should be a concern for all elements involved, including the spiritual guidance department responsible for providing spiritual guidance to patients suffering from illnesses.

One of the Islamic hospitals that provides spiritual guidance services to patients is Aisyiyah Kudus Hospital. Through observations conducted at least once a day, spiritual guides enter the patient's room. They greet the patient, introduce themselves, inquire about the patient's well-being, sometimes ask about the patient's condition, and conclude with a prayer. Based on this information, the explicit objective of this research is to analyze the implementation of spiritual guidance in caring for the mental health of patients at Aisyiyah hospital during their hospital stay.

### *Method*

This study is a qualitative research. In this study, the focus is on the implementation of mental health care for patients at Aisyiyah Kudus Hospital by the spiritual guidance department. Qualitative research, borrowing Moleong's terminology (Moleong, 2007), aims to understand phenomena such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and others experienced by research subjects holistically and through descriptive language and words, within a specific natural context. In this case, the observed process is the guidance provided to patients by the spiritual guidance department. Data collection methods include observation, interviews, and documentation.(Moleong, 2007)

Observation, borrowing Bungin's perspective (Bungin, 2013), is used to gather research data that can be observed by the researcher. This means that the data is collected through the researcher's observation using the senses. Observation is used to obtain data about the atmosphere of patient guidance in the hospital and other important aspects. On the other hand, interview, still borrowing Bungin's terminology (Bungin, 2013), is the process of obtaining information for research purposes through face-to-

face question-and-answer sessions with respondents, with or without an interview guide. In this case, information is sought from the spiritual guidance department of Aisyiyah Kudus Hospital. The data analysis used in this study includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, borrowing Miles and Huberman's approach as mentioned in Sugiyono (Sugiyono, 2005), which states that qualitative analysis activities are conducted interactively and continuously until completion, ensuring that the data is saturated.(Bungin, 2013)(Bungin, 2013)(Sugiyono, 2005)

### *Theoretical Study*

#### *Spiritual Guidance*

Guidance is a systematic assistance provided to individuals or communities to help them develop their own potentials in order to overcome various problems and determine their own responsible life path without relying on others. This assistance is provided continuously (Amin, 2013). Guidance, in principle, involves providing help or assistance. Help or assistance is the most important aspect of guidance (Dahlan, 2009). Meanwhile, according to the KBBI, spiritual is defined as relating to the spirit, in addition to the physical body. The spiritual aspect also requires nourishment and is connected to the soul.(Amin, 2013)(Dahlan, 2009)

Regarding spiritual guidance, it can be defined as assistance provided by an expert in the field of Islamic spirituality who is capable of helping to awaken the patient's spiritual enthusiasm and motivation for religious healing processes based on the Quran and Hadith as a guide for a Muslim's life in order to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter (Sahputra, 2020). Islamic spiritual guidance is the process of conveying Islamic values (spiritual) to patients/sufferers by a spiritual guide (spiritual counselor) in order to strengthen their faith and spirituality, enabling them to face the problems (illness) they are experiencing and accelerate their recovery (Hidayati, 2014). Based on the aforementioned understanding, spiritual guidance for patients is provided by a spiritual guide to provide motivation, cultivate a spirit of healing, and facilitate the recovery process from the illness, while also minimizing negative thoughts about the illness they are suffering from.(Sahputra, 2020)(Hidayati, 2014)

The objectives of providing guidance include at least five aspects. *First*, to bring about changes, improvements, mental health, and cleanliness of the soul and mind. The

soul becomes calm, gentle, and peaceful, with an open-minded attitude, and attains enlightenment, divine guidance, and divine grace. *Second*, to bring about changes, improvements, and proper behavior that can benefit oneself, the family environment, the work environment, as well as the social and natural environment. *Third*, to develop emotional intelligence in individuals, leading to the emergence and development of tolerance, solidarity, mutual assistance, and compassion. *Fourth*, to develop spiritual intelligence in individuals, leading to the emergence and development of a desire to obey their Lord, sincerity in obeying all His commands, and endurance in accepting His trials. And *fifth*, to develop divine potential so that individuals can fulfill their role as a good and righteous caliph, effectively addressing various life problems and providing benefits and safety to their environment in various aspects of life (Amin, 2013). The objectives of spiritual guidance, as defined above, serve to assist in the healing process of patients through methods and materials prepared by the spiritual development department. (Amin, 2013)

### *Principles of Spiritual Guidance*

Spiritual guidance, as a process of assisting individuals in their development, encompasses several important principles. At least, there are several important principles that can serve as guidelines, namely:

First, providing good news and enthusiasm for life. The spiritual guide should not immediately reveal the client's weaknesses, mistakes, and difficulties, but rather strive to create a joyful counseling atmosphere. Such a situation makes the patient happy, interested in engaging in conversation, and eventually becomes open to revealing their thoughts and secrets. Bringing joy to the patient is in accordance with the teachings of Islam as stated in Surah Saba [34], verse 28, "We have sent you (O Prophet) only as a deliverer of good news and a warner to all of humanity, but most people do not know".

Second, viewing the patient as a subject and servant of Allah. The patient is not an object of guidance but rather a subject who is developing. And they are a servant of Allah, which is the entrusted duty of a spiritual guide. They are not an object for the spiritual guide to be treated without moral-religious value, but rather they should be respected as an independent individual. Therefore, in the counseling relationship, the

one who should speak the most is the patient themselves. Hence, the effort of the spiritual guide is to explore the patient's potential, weaknesses, and difficulties.

Third, unconditional respect for the patient. Respecting the patient is a fundamental requirement for a joyful and open counseling relationship. This respect is intended as an effort by the spiritual guide to use words and body language that show respect.

Fourth, engaging in Islamic dialogue. In this regard, the spiritual guide uses religious approaches to touch the patient's heart. Therefore, it is appropriate for the spiritual guide to study religious knowledge, as when the patient requests information about it, it can be provided in full, including religious teachings such as shalat, doa-doa, fiqh, and so on.

Fifth, the personal exemplification of the counselor. The personal exemplification of the spiritual guide can touch the patient's emotions to identify with the spiritual guide. This serves as a suggestion for the client to change towards the positive direction. The motivation to change is caused by the personality, insight, skills, and virtuous deeds of the spiritual guide towards the patient. The spiritual guide is honest, righteous, broad-minded, and attentive to the patient. This exemplification is expected to transform attitudes towards a better direction (Diponegoro, 2011).(Diponegoro, 2011)

In general, the material of Islamic spiritual guidance can be classified into four main subjects, namely: faith (akidah), sharia, transactions (muamalah), and morals (akhlak). The main issue that becomes the material of Islamic spiritual guidance is Islamic faith (akidah). This aspect of faith will shape human morals (akhlak). Therefore, the first material of Islamic spiritual guidance is the issue of faith or belief. The second material is sharia, which is a very broad material that binds all Muslims. It is the heart that cannot be separated from the lives of Muslims in various parts of the world and is something to be proud of. The advantages of Islamic sharia material include the fact that it is not possessed by other communities. In relation to the issue of spiritual guidance for patients, it is focused on the procedures of worship while sitting, lying down, and even with gestures. Furthermore, the material of transactions (muamalah), Islam is a religion that emphasizes the affairs of muamalah more than ritual matters. Islam pays more attention to social aspects of life than ritual aspects. Worship in transactions is

interpreted as worship that includes the relationship with Allah in order to serve Allah. And finally, the material of morals (akhlak), this material is oriented towards determining good and bad, reason and heart strive to find general standards through the customs of society. Because worship in Islam is closely related to morals. The use of reason and the cultivation of noble morals are teachings of Islam (Munir & Ilaihi, 2006).(Munir & Ilaihi, 2006)

### *Principles of Guidance*

Borrowing Lubis' perspective (Lubis, 2007), the principles in spiritual guidance as the rules and regulations applied and used as the basis and guidance for its implementation are as follows:(Lubis, 2007)

First, the principle of monotheism. Monotheism is the affirmation of Allah, which is the main requirement for establishing a relationship between the servant and His Creator. Monotheism is intended as the total surrender of all affairs and problems to Allah, so that there is synchronization between human desires and the will of Allah, which in turn will produce as-sidq, al-ikhlas, al-'ilm, dan al-ma'rifah. Psychologically, there is a strong correlation between monotheism and the healing of the human soul. In this regard, Allah is placed as the only source, namely the source of mental/heart health, the source of healing mental/heart diseases, the source of strength to solve problems, and the source of spiritual tranquility. Spiritual guidance services must be carried out based on the principle of monotheism, and must start from the basis of monotheism towards humans who monotheize Allah in accordance with the essence of Islam as a monotheistic religion. The entire process must also take place in a monotheistic manner as the beginning and end of human life.

Second, the principle of action. As a helping process, spiritual guidance is not only verbal interaction (verbally) between the spiritual guide and the patient, but more importantly, the patient can find himself through his interaction, understand his problems, have the willingness to solve his problems, and take action to solve his problems. In the process of Islamic guidance, the spiritual guide is required to be realistic, with the understanding that before providing assistance, he must first reflect the figure of someone who has a combination of knowledge and action. The process of

spiritual guidance to patients essentially reflects his conscience, which has been conditioned well in advance.

Third, the principle of noble morals (*akhlak al-karimah*). This principle encompasses both the goals and the process of spiritual guidance. In terms of goals, patients are expected to reach the stage of having noble morals. While in terms of process, the relationship between the spiritual guide and the patient is based on applicable and respected norms. As it is known, the mission of the Prophet Muhammad is to improve human morals, as stated clearly in the hadiths related to the perfection of morals.

Fourth, the principle of professionalism. The success of a job will largely depend on the professionalism of the person performing it. The same applies to Islamic guidance, as its implementation will not yield results if the spiritual guide does not possess the necessary expertise. Islamic guidance is a field of work within the realm of religious matters, and Islam demands the competence that every spiritual guide must possess in order to avoid failure. Expertise in this context primarily relates to understanding empirical problems and the psychological issues of patients that must be comprehended rationally and scientifically.

Fifth, the principle of confidentiality. The counseling process must touch upon the patient's identity, and the person who knows their condition best is the patient themselves. However, their psychological problems are often seen as something that should be kept confidential. While they cannot resolve these problems independently, they require the assistance of someone more capable. In this regard, they face two problems: the problem before the counseling process and the problem related to its resolution. If the patient perceives that the confidentiality is not guaranteed, the view that these problems are a disgrace can hinder the utilization of counseling services.

### *Mental Health*

The Republic of Indonesia Law Number 18 of 2014 concerning Mental Health explains that mental health is a condition in which an individual can develop physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially, enabling them to be aware of their own abilities, cope with stress, work productively, and contribute to their community (UU No. 18, 2014). (UU No. 18, 2014)



Mental health is a condition in which an individual can develop all aspects of growth optimally, including physical, intellectual, and emotional aspects, in harmony with the development of others, enabling them to interact with their environment. Mental symptoms or functions such as thoughts, feelings, desires, attitudes, perceptions, perspectives, and life beliefs must coordinate with each other, resulting in harmony free from doubt, anxiety, restlessness, and inner conflicts (conflicts within the individual themselves) (Fakhriyani, 2017). (Fakhriyani, 2017)

Borrowing the opinion of Amin (Amin, 2013) who quotes Kartini Kartono, the distinctive characteristics of a mentally healthy individual include: 1) the coordination of all efforts and potentials, enabling them to easily adapt to the demands of standard environmental and social norms, as well as rapid social changes, 2) having integration and regulation of their own personality structure, enabling them to actively participate in society, 3) consistently engaging in self-realization processes, having life goals, and always striving for self-transcendence, seeking to surpass their current condition, and 4) being enthusiastic, physically and mentally healthy, harmonious in their personality, efficient in their actions, and capable of experiencing pleasure and satisfaction in meeting their needs.(Amin, 2013)

Meanwhile, the Islamic view of human beings, in addition to being servants of Allah, they are also His caliphs on earth who have the responsibility to be accountable for their lives to the Creator. The Islamic view of mental health refers to the Muslim's worldview, as reflected in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 201, *"Our Lord! Grant us 'Your bounties' in this world," but they will have no share in the Hereafter:*". If the secular concept of mental health is only oriented towards four aspects, namely: oneself, relationships with others, the natural environment, and living in this world, then in the Islamic view, in addition to these four aspects, it is also supported by four other elements, namely its vertical relationship with God, the level of devotion in worship, the quality of character, and belief in the Hereafter (Mubarok, 2000).(Mubarok, 2000)

According to Najati's perspective (Najati, 2003), there are several indicators of mental health as expressed by experts. These indicators are as follows: a) spiritual dimension, which includes faith in Allah, performing worship, accepting Allah's provisions and destiny, feeling close to Allah, fulfilling needs in a lawful manner, b) psychological dimension, which includes honesty, being free from envy, hatred, and

resentment, self-confidence, ability to endure failure and anxiety, having emotional balance, easily accepting the realities of life, being able to control and restrain desires, and not being overly ambitious, c) social dimension, which includes loving parents, peers, and children, helping those in need, avoiding actions that can harm others, being honest with others, and having the courage to take on social responsibilities, and d) biological dimension, which includes being free from various diseases, not having physical disabilities, forming a positive understanding of one's physical self, paying attention to physical health, and not burdening the body with excessive loads.(Najati, 2003)

## **Discussion**

Humans do not always live in a state of good health; sometimes they also experience illness. When one is sick, the steps to be taken are to seek treatment and immediately pray to Allah. Patients' efforts include seeking medical treatment, and doctors and nurses also make efforts. Medication and good service processes are also forms of effort. Ultimately, it is only Allah, the Almighty, who determines healing, so patients and their families pray together for recovery from Allah (Kudus, n.d.).(Kudus, n.d.)

Inpatients sometimes need assistance from others who can provide comfort, listen to their grievances, or pray for them. In the context of a hospital, spiritual counselors play a crucial role. According to Arifin (Arifin, 2009), the role of spiritual counselors for patients in a hospital is to intervene in the mental and psychological conditions of patients to assist in the healing process, along with other therapies. The difference in the capacity of the role of spiritual counselors for patients compared to general spiritual counselors (such as religious scholars and leaders) is their ability to provide therapy to patients so that patients are not only educated to behave well but are also treated first in order to recover. Because what patients need is to be healed, and only then can they be directed to behave well, such as being patient, relying on Allah, and so on. (Arifin, 2009)

The forms of spiritual counseling services for patients at Aisyiyah Hospital are divided into three phases: daily, weekly, and monthly. First, the daily form. In daily spiritual guidance activities, visits are made to newly admitted patients to provide

motivation for recovery or to pray for the patients. Additionally, patients and visitors are reminded when prayer times arrive. Second, the weekly form. The weekly activities that have been ongoing include classical religious studies for employees, which aim to increase faith and serve as motivation to always serve patients to the best of their abilities. The third form is the monthly form. In the monthly phase, activities such as structural religious studies, Quran recitation and memorization, are conducted. Memorization is conditionally carried out once a month, in addition to community study group activities at the employees' residences (Rania, 2023). In the daily phase, according to the existing regulations, the spiritual guidance department focuses on newly admitted patients in the inpatient ward, with the aim of providing motivation and prayers for the patients, providing knowledge and information on prayer and tayammum procedures, as it is possible that some patients may not understand the procedures for worship when they are sick. In the weekly phase, spiritual guidance activities are focused on employees, aiming to provide an understanding of Islamic values that can be applied in assisting the guidance process for patients. The monthly phase of spiritual guidance is intended for the hospital's structural staff as an effort to improve self-quality. Some of the activities include inviting speakers to deliver predetermined topics and conducting Quran recitation and memorization sessions using prepared materials.(Rania, 2023)

According to Rania, in Aisyiyah Hospital, patients who are spiritually nurtured are prioritized for newly admitted patients, as the spiritual aspect is not yet fully developed. The information conveyed to patients includes introducing the staff, providing information on how to perform prayers while sitting or lying down, motivating healing, and concluding with a prayer together. Spiritual guidance for patients is crucial because even though the duration of each patient visit is only 5-10 minutes, after receiving education, it has some influence on their inner peace. Furthermore, after receiving spiritual guidance from the spiritual counselor, some impacts include patients who previously did not understand the proper way to perform prayers or tayammum (dry ablution) becoming aware and understanding the procedures, and families starting to respond by bringing prayer garments and other items (Rania, 2023). Prioritizing spiritual guidance for new patients is due to the fact that generally, patients who are newly admitted to the inpatient ward require moral and spiritual support related to the illness they are facing. The guidance process does not

require a long time, as the duration is adjusted to the patient's needs. At least the patient has understood and received education about information regarding worship practices while being sick, and most importantly, providing understanding to the patient's family. (Rania, 2023)

In addition to the implementation of spiritual guidance provided by the spiritual guidance department, it is important for patients to maintain mental stability through *taqarruban ilallah* (drawing closer to Allah). This is supported by Hasan's opinion (Hasan, 2008), stating that Islam teaches ways to maintain mental health and avoid stress, such as remembering Allah as a means to solve problems. Among the most important practices are prayer, recite the Quran, and reciting supplications. Firstly, establishing prayer. Prayer serves as a means to solve problems and is extensively discussed in the Quran, such as in Surah Al-Baqarah [2], verses 45-46, *"And seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, it is a burden except for the humble those who are certain that they will meet their Lord and to Him they will return"*. Prayer encompasses various important elements. (1) Prayer reduces psychophysiological reactivity, resulting in relaxation responses. (2) As a means of communication, prayer can provide psychological support for those who perform it. One surrenders oneself to the Almighty, believed to possess unlimited power. In this regard, one recites the sacred words of the Quran, which contain eternal love, magnificence, power, and knowledge. (Hasan, 2008)

Secondly, reading the Quran. Recitation of the Quran can be done separately outside of prayer. For Muslims, the Quran is a guidance that provides solutions to the problems they face. The Quran is a healing and remedy for various ailments. This is stated in Surah Yunus [10], verse 57 *"O humanity! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the believers"*. Thirdly, reciting supplications. Islam also teaches its followers to directly seek help from Allah through supplications. In difficult times, a Muslim is taught to turn to Allah, self-reflect, and seek forgiveness. After that, Muslims should strive to improve themselves. Supplication is a means of communication with Allah that can provide support in facing conflicts and bring tranquility.

According to Hasan (Hasan, 2008), in addition to the process of drawing closer to Allah, the activity that needs to be considered is behavior management. Currently, psychologists and doctors are trying to develop the concept of behavioral medicine. This

approach prioritizes self-regulatory techniques that emphasize self-discipline as an adaptive way to treat mental stress. There is also the approach of behavioral activation, where individuals are given activities that make them feel valued as a starting point for overall self-improvement. Furthermore, social support from family and the surrounding community also plays an important role in the process of chronic illness. In the behavioral treatment approach, the treatment of chronic illness does not solely depend on pain medication. Positive words and thoughts, as well as responsibility towards family and the social environment, also play a significant role. Research results also show that spousal support during illness is a key determinant of recovery in healthcare. This is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of positive thinking and the regulation of marital and social relationships. Additionally, social responsibility and social support from neighbors are also important in addressing mental health.(Hasan, 2008)

The obstacles faced by the spiritual care department include the inability to meet the maximum target of patient visits due to inadequate spiritual care staff compared to the large number of patients, and sometimes there are child patients who are traumatized when staff enter the inpatient ward (Rania, 2023). Based on this, it is considered necessary to increase the number of spiritual care staff and enhance the competence of the spiritual care department through training and workshops to improve skills in caring for patients who are hospitalized.(Rania, 2023)

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of spiritual care staff for inpatients in hospitals should always be accompanied by the guidance of the patient's spiritual counselor as a form of care and attention from fellow human beings. Spiritual care for patients should be provided at least once a day, taking into account the patient's condition, and not only prioritized for newly admitted patients but also for patients who have been hospitalized for a long time. This is especially important for patients with severe illnesses, as providing spiritual guidance only at the beginning is not sufficient. For hospitals with insufficient spiritual counseling staff, it is encouraged to increase the number of spiritual care staff so that the spiritual needs of patients can be met. In situations where the number of spiritual care staff cannot be met, alternative solutions can be sought by

collaborating with other parties, such as religious organizations that have many experts in the field of religion, taking into account the expertise of these individuals to minimize the shortage of spiritual care staff. Additionally, other media can also be utilized to support the process of spiritual guidance for patients.

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