



Spirituality and Mental Health in Covid-19 Survivors

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic can affect not only the physical but also mental health of the survivors. Particularly, mental health problems may influence their emotional, cognitive, physical, and social aspects. Meanwhile, one of the factors that closely relate to the problems is spirituality. This study aimed to determine the relationship between spirituality and mental health in COVID-19 survivors. The type of the research was descriptive correlation. The research respondents totaled 100 COVID-19 survivors. The sampling technique used simple random sampling. To collect the data, The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) was utilized to measure spirituality and The Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) to measure mental health. The results showed that the majority of respondents had a high level of spirituality (52%) and a good mental health (64%). The chi-square test results obtained a P value of 0.003, which means there was a significant relationship between spirituality and mental health in COVID-19 survivors. This research showed that the higher the spirituality, the better the mental health of COVID-19 survivors.

Keywords: COVID-19 survivors, mental health, spirituality

Spiritualitas dan Kesehatan Mental pada Penyintas COVID-19

Abstrak

Pandemi COVID-19 dapat mempengaruhi kesehatan fisik dan mental para penyintasnya. Khususnya masalah kesehatan dapat berpengaruh pada aspek emosional, kognitif, fisik, dan sosial mereka. Sementara itu, salah satu faktor yang berkaitan erat dengan masalah tersebut adalah spiritualitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan spiritualitas dengan kesehatan mental pada penyintas COVID-19. Jenis penelitian ini adalah korelasi deskriptif. Responden penelitian berjumlah 100 orang penyintas COVID-19. Pengambilan sampel menggunakan simple random sampling. Untuk mengumpulkan data, Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) digunakan untuk mengukur spiritualitas dan Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) untuk mengukur kesehatan mental. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan sebagian besar responden memiliki tingkat spiritualitas tinggi (52%) dan kesehatan jiwa baik (64%). Hasil uji chi-square mendapatkan nilai P sebesar 0,003 yang berarti terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara spiritualitas dengan kesehatan mental pada penyintas COVID-19. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa semakin tinggi spiritualitas maka kesehatan mental penyintas COVID-19 akan semakin baik.

Kata Kunci: *penyintas COVID-19, kesehatan mental, spiritualitas*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a threat to global health that can significantly impact all sectors of human life because all forms of activity must be limited. This pandemic causes high mortality and impacts physical, psychological, and social aspects (Cao et al., 2020). According to (Huang et al., 2020), along with the development of this case, people's lives in the world have changed, resulting in mental conditions being disturbed, such as boredom, anxiety, insomnia, fear, and even depression. Several studies say that this pandemic can have a physical and psychological impact. It can occur in healthy and confirmed people and people who have been cured of COVID-19 (Einvik et al., 2021).

Until the beginning of March 2022, the development of COVID-19 in Indonesia was still high. Namely, 5,981,022 confirmed cases, 5,858,238 recovered patients, and 154,221 people who died. In West Java, 1,091,786 confirmed cases, 1,036,088 recovered patients, and 15,567 patients who died (Pikobar, 2022). Meanwhile, in the Sumedang district, confirmed cases reached 10,945, with 359 deaths and 10,313 recovered patients. They were declared negative for COVID-19 based on swab results using the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) analysis method and asymptomatic patients who had completed the isolation period for 14 days (COVID-19 Task Force, 2022). It shows that the number of recoveries is higher than those who die. This group of patients who have passed the isolation and treatment period is called COVID-19 survivors.

In Indonesia, several cases of COVID-19 survivors have been dismissed from work due to the long treatment time. In addition, some COVID-19 survivors have become gossip subjects, even though they have been declared cured and negative from the PCR results. These cases add to the burden of suffering from survivors who have experienced physical disturbances and are added to emotional and mental health problems due to social pressure (Singh, Shweta ; Bhutani, Saniya ; Fatima, 2020).

In COVID-19 survivors, experiences during quarantine or isolation can cause emotional and mental health problems such as anxiety, sleep disturbances, panic attacks, trauma, hopelessness, and helplessness (Shaw, 2020). It is in line with (Brooks et al., 2020) research that the

psychological impacts during confirmed COVID-19 include post-traumatic stress disorder, confusion, anxiety, frustration, fear of infection, insomnia, and feeling helpless. A very significant impact is the social and mental impact experienced by COVID-19 survivors because they are considered to carry infectious diseases (Dahono, 2020). In addition, the psychological effects of post-infection recovery coupled with stigma significantly impact survivors' functioning in daily life (Brogden A K, Guthmiller M J, 2020). People who have recovered from COVID-19 infection can experience various stigmas, such as fear of being tested for SARS-CoV-2, feelings of isolation from others, and internalized stigma, namely experiencing shame and self-denial (Sotgiu & Dobler, 2020). Some COVID-19 survivors also suffer severe mental stress after being discharged and rehabilitated (Ramanathan et al., 2020).

Studies in China state that COVID-19 survivors may experience psychological reactions including increased stress, uncertainty, sadness, anxiety, and a long-term psychological impact. During mental health examinations of patients and survivors, it was observed that they also experienced symptoms of mental disorders and immune dysfunction (Gennaro et al., 2020). Depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are the most common mental disorders that require special attention after recovery (Stuart, 2013).

The mental health of COVID-19 survivors must receive special attention, especially if they still feel frustrated because of the symptoms of the disease that are still felt even though they have been declared cured. They must understand that this is a process. One of the efforts to minimize the symptoms of mental health as part of the effects of COVID-19 is to build individual capacity to adapt in the face of reality. The individual's capacity reduces stress when faced with various forms of pressure, changes a depressed state into something natural to deal with, and rebuilds more stable physical, psychological, and social conditions.

One way to increase individual capacity is to increase spirituality. Spirituality is personal, affective, experiential, and wise. It contains values of honesty, beauty, and happiness. Several studies have shown the influences on an individual's mental health condition. Spirituality can provide strength for individuals who experience negative

emotions and suicidal ideation and increase resilience when facing life's stresses (Hodapp & Zwingmann, 2019).

Many COVID-19 sufferers and COVID-19 survivors experience stress that triggers other mental health disorders, and some even lead to depression. Patients undergoing treatment for COVID-19 infections need enthusiasm and fighting power to recover. Not only can it be done through physical treatment, but the spiritual approach according to the religion adopted is constructive in the healing process. Thus, this study aims to determine the relationship between spirituality and mental health in COVID-19 survivors.

Methods

The type of research used in this study was descriptive quantitative with a correlational approach that links spirituality with mental health. The research was conducted in July 2022. The research location was carried out in Sumedang Regency. The population of this study was COVID-19 survivors in Sumedang Regency. This study's sampling technique was simple random sampling with a total of 100 respondents. The data collection was done by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The researcher conducted an ethical test at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia with the ethical test number B-1667/UN40.PL/PJ.00.00/2022. After passing the ethical test, the researcher conducted research by distributing questionnaires to respondents. After that, data processing was carried out so that readers can easily understand the data.

The questionnaire used to measure spiritual level in this study was the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) questionnaire. The DSES questionnaire consists of 16 positive question items (favorable) compiled by Lynn G Underwood (2019). This questionnaire had been declared valid and reliable. The DSES instrument had an average value of Alpha Crombach 0.79-0.97, so it was reliable.

Mental health measurement was done using the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Three aspects were measured in the MHC-SF, namely emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social welfare (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). MHC-SF consists of 14 question items, including 3 items that measure emotional well-being, 6 items that measure

psychological well-being, and 5 items that measure social well-being.

The data that had been collected was analyzed univariately to determine the level of spirituality and mental health levels of COVID-19 survivors while determining the relationship between spirituality and mental health using the chi-square test.

Result and Discussion

This research was conducted in Sumedang Regency in July 2022. The number of respondents in this study was 100 COVID-19 survivors.

• Participants Overview

The general description of the participants describes the demographic distribution of the respondents. The data includes gender, age, occupation, education, and marital status. The description of participant characteristics can be seen in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	N	%
Age		
18-60	82	82
>60	18	18
Sex		
Male	28	28
Female	72	72
Occupation		
Employed	49	49
Unemployed	51	51
Marital Status		
Married	52	52
Unmarried	45	45
Widow/widower	3	3
Education		
Elementary School	5	5
Junio High School	18	18
Senior High School	38	38
University	39	39

According to table 1, the data shows that most of the respondents (82%) were in the age range of 18-60 years. The sex of almost the majority (72%) were women. More than half of respondents (51%) were unemployed, More than half of respondents (52%) were married. The level of education of majority respondents was primarily (39%) tertiary education.

Tabel 2. Spirituality and Mental Health of Covid Survivors

Variable	N	%
Spirituality		
High	52	52
Moderate	46	46
Low	2	2
Mental health		
Good	64	64
Medium	32	32
Poor	4	4

Table 2 shows that most of the spiritual levels of COVID-19 survivors were high (52%), and the mental health of COVID-19 survivors was at a reasonable level (64%).

Tabel 3. Analysis of Spiritual Relationships with Mental Health

	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	α
Pearson Chi-Square	0,863	0,03

According to table 3, it can be explained that there was a significant relationship between the spiritual relationship with mental health in respondents with a P value 0.03. Furthermore, a correlation value of 0.863 with a positive correlation direction means that if spirituality is high, the level of mental health will be good, and vice versa. If spirituality is in a low state, then mental health will be less.

Based on the study's results, it was found that the spiritual level of COVID-19 survivors was at a high level (52%). It indicates that most of the spiritual needs of COVID-19 survivors have been well met. Spiritual needs are basic needs needed by every human being. Spirituality is related to making meaning in life through one's relationship with oneself, others, the environment, and God in overcoming various life problems.

Spirituality in health is considered necessary. Suppose someone whose spiritual needs are met will be able to understand the positive meaning of God's existence in life, develop meaning in an event, and believe in the wisdom of the events experienced. In addition, it will also be able to develop and establish positive and dynamic relationships between fellow human beings through belief, trust, and love. Able to foster personal integrity, feel self-worth, and have hope

because they feel their life will be directed (Hamid, 2009). That someone experiencing problems will question the spiritual value of oneself, the purpose of life, and the source of the meaning of life. When someone experiences psychological problems such as anxiety and has tried his best to overcome his anxiety but does not get optimal results from his efforts, he will seek comfort and strength from God.

Good spirituality can increase positive coping mechanisms that can improve the mental health status of individuals so that individuals tend to be able to cope with various stressors (Hamid, 2014). It is in line with iTimmin's research (2017) that if spiritual needs have been met, it can improve coping mechanisms to deal with difficult or challenging situations. In this pandemic, spiritual life will be a significant part of coping. An excellent spiritual life will build a spiritually strong community in the face of difficult times amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The form of spirituality during the COVID-19 pandemic can be done by increasing friendship, reading scriptures, reducing exposure to news from the media, taking time for worship, and getting closer to God (Hamid, 2014).

The study's results showed that the mental health of most COVID-19 survivors (64%) was reasonable. Because the impact of COVID-19 has been felt for several months, the ability to adapt to unacceptable conditions is quite good, and the stigma about COVID-19 in the community has gradually improved. In addition, some survivors have entered the recovery stage at the stage of building resilience where they have resumed carrying out daily activities and have shown themselves again and can suppress negative feelings from within them.

The COVID-19 pandemic will affect individual mental health because each individual is required to adapt to changing conditions. Mental health is a state of well-being in an individual where he can develop his potential, be able to cope with stress usually, perform social functions well, and carry out work productively. So mental health is not only understood as the absence or absence of physical illness. Mental health problems can occur due to predisposing and precipitating factors, namely the presence of biological, psychological, and social stressors experienced by individuals. Biological stressors relate to genetic conditions or diseases and their symptoms (Stuart, 2013). COVID-19 survivors are prone to experiencing

mental health disorders. Mental disorders in COVID-19 survivors are reported to experience feelings of nervousness, anxiety or restlessness, and sleep disturbances (Gennaro et al., 2020). Even research in Wuhan reported that survivors had contemplated suicide (Wu et al., 2020).

Mental health disorders that arise in COVID-19 survivors can be caused by fear of relapse, of transmitting the COVID-19 virus to other families, and fear of dying from COVID-19 (Lebrasseur et al., 2021). Concerns about the future are also felt in post-COVID-19 patients (Moradi et al., 2020). Post-COVID-19 patients who experience stress have severe cases of illness or symptoms. The stress experienced by COVID-19 survivors can be caused by being traumatized by repeated events, losing loved ones, and negative stigma from society, thus disturbing the minds of Covid-19 survivors (Moradi et al., 2020).

Based on the results, it found that there was a relationship between spirituality and mental health with a p-value of 0.003. It is in line with research conducted (McIntosh, D.N, Poulin, M.J, Silver, R.C, dan Holman, 2011) explains that spirituality and religion can positively impact one's health and mental status. It is also explained that with the increase in spiritual behavior, there will be an increase in one's mental health because the relationship with one another is very close (Pargament, et al. 2005). It is also supported by (Newton, A. T., & McIntosh, 2010) that spirituality affects a person's psychology so that someone will feel comfortable and can solve the problems they face.

The literature review conducted by (Reeves, R.R., & Reynolds, 2009) explained that the role of spirituality is needed in improving the mental status of a person with mental disorders. It is essential to the patient's daily activities, especially those with mental disorders. It can increase confidence and immunity if they are confident.

Research results in (Septiarini et al., 2018) if spiritual needs increase, the level of mental status will increase, and vice versa. If the fulfillment of spiritual needs decreases, the level of mental status will decrease. The fulfillment of spiritual needs will result in inner peace in people with mental disorders so that the condition of ODGJ will become stable (Canadian Nursing Association, 2009). It is in line with Hidayati's research (2021) which says that spirituality reduces the anxiety of COVID-19 patients.

Research conducted by Esa et al. in 2010 proved that spirituality positively influences individual mental health and reduces mental disorders and factors that threaten individual mental health (Jafari et al., 2010). It is reinforced by research by (Ashouri et al., 2016) regarding the relationship between spiritual well-being and individual mental health. This study found that individuals with practical spiritual activities will have excellent life motivation and a low level of anxiety (Ashouri et al., 2016).

The results of this study are also in line with the opinion of (Samuel R Weber 1, 2014) which states that spirituality can affect mental health. According to Weber and Pargament, if previously in the field of clinical psychology, spirituality and religion contributed to mental illness, in subsequent developments, spirituality contributed to improving people's mental health, social, emotional well-being, and happiness quality of life. (Samuel R Weber 1, 2014) opinion is based on several previous studies, including research conducted by Koenig in clinical psychology. The results of Koenig's research show that spirituality and religious beliefs influence mental health in people with depression and stress and can reduce the urge to commit suicide (Ahmed Khalifac, 2012). Likewise, Mohr et al. (2011) research shows that spirituality is practical for healing people with schizophrenia, a mental health disorder.

When survivors of COVID-19 increasingly believe that all events occur because of God, who has the will to create or make things happen like COVID-19. Survivors will find it easy to accept what happened and interpret each event or event that occurs positively, namely by believing that all the events are God's destiny and having an optimistic attitude to get out of the pressures faced after the disaster. COVID-19 survivors' belief in God that in every difficulty, there is help has a positive impact on mental health. According to Pargament and Cumming (in Reich et al., 2010). Struggling to be a survivor of COVID-19 is not only a physical and medical problem but further, it is the occurrence of mental and spiritual problems. With calm and getting closer, COVID-19 survivors can confidently accept every condition through vertical communication through their beliefs. If we can take lessons as survivors of COVID-19, that is true spiritual healing.

Patients undergoing treatment for COVID-19 infection require enthusiasm and fighting power to

recover. Not only can it be done through physical treatment alone. According to the religion adopted, the spiritual approach is constructive in the healing process. The method that integrates the psychological and spiritual dimensions for self-healing provides a calming effect to calm oneself from mental turmoil and fear.

Conclusions

The Covid-19 pandemic is a global health threat that can have a significant impact on all sectors of individual and community life. In the health sector, apart from having a physical impact, Covid-19 can have an impact on mental health problems. Many Covid-19 sufferers and Covid survivors experience stress which triggers other mental health disorders, some even causing depression. Patients undergoing treatment for COVID-19 infection need enthusiasm and fighting power to recover. It can't only be done through physical care. A spiritual approach according to one's religion really helps the healing process. In order to overcome this, it is necessary to increase the professional abilities of nurses in providing nursing care from the bio-psycho-socio and spiritual aspects of patients to Covid-19 survivors.

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