

EFFECTS OF SURAH AR-RAHMAN THERAPY ON THE ANXIETY LEVELS OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRAK

Gangguan kecemasan telah secara signifikan memperburuk kesehatan mental populasi muda kita, terutama mahasiswa kedokteran, karena kurikulum akademik yang menuntut, jadwal belajar yang ketat, dan beban ekspektasi untuk menjadi profesional yang mahir. Berbagai metode untuk meringankan kecemasan telah digunakan sebelumnya, di antaranya terapi Al-Quran yang telah menunjukkan kemanjuran yang luar biasa bagi umat Islam. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menilai dampak dari terapi Surah al-Rahman (surah ke-55 dalam Al-Quran) terhadap tingkat kecemasan di kalangan mahasiswa kedokteran tahun kedua. Sebuah studi eksperimental pra-pasca dilakukan pada sampel 68 peserta dari tahun ke-2 MBBS di Federal Medical College. Para peserta diklasifikasikan ke dalam dua kategori: Kategori 1 mencakup individu yang menjalani 1-6 sesi, sedangkan Kategori 2 terdiri dari mereka yang menjalani 7-12 sesi. Tingkat kecemasan dievaluasi dengan menggunakan Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan SPSS versi 25, dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji perbedaan median. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa proporsi peserta yang mengalami kecemasan berat menurun dari 24,6% (sebelum terapi) menjadi 3,1% (setelah terapi). Hasil positif dalam pengurangan kecemasan diamati terlepas dari jenis kelamin dan lokasi tempat tinggal (p -value>0,005). Perbedaan yang signifikan dalam skor kecemasan antara pra-terapi dan pasca-terapi dicatat pada kedua kategori. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menyiratkan bahwa terapi Surah Ar-Rahman adalah teknik yang efektif dalam mengurangi kecemasan. Jika sesi terapi Surah-Ar-Rahman diselenggarakan secara teratur di institusi medis, perkembangan spiritual mahasiswa kedokteran dapat ditingkatkan secara substansial, menumbuhkan kepercayaan diri dan kompetensi yang penting untuk unggul dalam karir medis mereka. Keterbatasan penelitian: jumlah sampel yang kecil dan tidak ada kelompok kontrol.

Kata kunci: Kecemasan, BAI, Mahasiswa kedokteran, Terapi Alquran, Surat Ar-Rahman.

ABSTRACT

Anxiety disorders have significantly deteriorated the mental well-being of our young populace, especially medical students, due to the demanding academic curriculum, rigorous study schedules, and the burden of expectations to excel as proficient professionals. Various methods to alleviate anxiety have been employed previously, among which Quran therapy has demonstrated remarkable efficacy for Muslims. The objective of this study is to assess the impact of Surah al-Rahman therapy (the 55th chapter of the Holy Quran) on anxiety levels among 2nd year medical students. A pre-post experimental study was carried out on a sample of 68 participants from the 2nd year of MBBS at Federal Medical College. The participants were classified into two categories: Category 1 encompassed individuals who underwent 1-6 sessions, while Category 2 comprised those who underwent 7-12 sessions. Anxiety levels were evaluated utilizing the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25, incorporating descriptive statistics and tests for median difference. The findings of the study indicate that the proportion of participants experiencing severe anxiety decreased from 24.6% (pre-therapy) to 3.1% (post-therapy). Positive outcomes in anxiety reduction were observed irrespective

of gender and residency location (p -value >0.005). A significant difference in anxiety scores between pre-therapy and post-therapy was noted in both categories. The conclusion of the study imply that Surah-Ar-Rahman therapy is an effective technique in alleviating anxiety. If sessions of Surah-Ar-Rahman therapy are regularly organized in medical institutions, the spiritual development of medical students could be substantially enhanced, fostering self-assurance and competence essential for excelling in their medical careers. Study limitations: small sample size and no control group.

Keywords: Anxiety, BAI, Medical students, Quran Therapy, Surah Ar-Rahman.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health disorders are gaining substantial significance because of their prevalence in every age group, especially adults. Anxiety is a displeasing condition characterized by tension, worry, fear, confusion and dislike which is subjective and originates from concerns about future insecurities¹. A meta-analysis showed high prevalence of anxiety (33.8%) among medical students globally². Anxiety disorder was also reported to be the sixth leading debilitating factor associated with various issues such as suicidal ideation and unemployment³.

Various pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods have been used for the management of anxiety out of which non-pharmacological ones include Psychoeducation (informing the patient, and those affected e.g parents, relatives about the symptoms and chronicity of the victim's condition), Mindfulness (a method consisting of the patient having conscious awareness of their own thoughts, feelings, emotions, bodily sensations and encouraging acceptance), Psychotherapy (usage of psychological methods, e.g Cognitive-behavioral therapy), Yoga and Art therapy⁴. There's also "Music Therapy" which was defined by the American Music Therapy Association as "using clinical and evidence-based music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a certified professional who has completed an approved music therapy program"⁵. In addition to above mentioned therapeutic methods, Quranic therapy is the technique mostly practiced by Muslims to overcome psychological distress.

Quran is the Divine Holy Book of Muslims. Through its rhythmic effects (via reading) and as a means for spiritual connection to GOD (via reading, listening, memorizing or contemplating on it), is used as a treatment modality for various psychological and physical ailments in the Muslim population⁶. Various studies have been conducted to evaluate the effect of Quran recitation on the psychological wellbeing of a person⁷. A systematic review revealed a positive effect of listening to Holy Quran recitation in reducing anxiety in various settings like in medical students before their exams and before entering clinical practice, athletes, pregnant females, and ICU patient⁸. An experimental study found similar effects of listening to Holy Quran

recitation on alleviating anxiety among medical students before OSCE⁹. According to a single group pre-posttest experimental study conducted on class 9 students, the anxiety levels of the majority of students participants (>60%) decreased from moderate to mild category after listening to Murrotal Al-Quran¹⁰. A study conducted in Sriwaja, Palembang evaluated the effect of Al-Mulk and Al-Hasyr therapy (chapters of Holy Quran) on anxiety levels of medical students and a decrease in anxiety levels was noted. Among 114 chapters of the Holy Quran, Surah Ar-Rahman is 55th, comprising seventy-eight verses. The name of the Chapter "Ar-Rahman" means "The Most Merciful" (referring to GOD). Surah Ar-Rahman, among others, is one of the most commonly read Chapters of the Holy Quran by the Muslims.

The Purpose of this study was to determine the effect of Surah-Rahman therapy on the anxiety levels of 2nd year medical students. According to a meta-analysis, 2nd year medical students have the highest prevalence of anxiety among students of other academic years¹¹. This served as a basis for selecting 2nd year medical students as a target population of this study. They are also prone to various factors like the academic burden, uncertainty about future career and responsibility to succeed¹².

2. METHODS

This is a pre-post experimental study. The sampling technique used was the total sampling in which entire target population is taken as a respondent, namely 105 2nd year MBBS students of Federal Medical College, Islamabad. After taking ethical approval from ERB, an introductory session was arranged to give students a brief introduction of anxiety, its effects on students, and various therapeutic modalities used to control it.

The study aim and data collection procedure were explained in detail. After the introductory session, from the 105 students, 93 were willing to take part in the study. They were asked to fill the self-report Pre-therapy questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of demographic profile and anxiety scoring scale (Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)). The BAI consists of 21 descriptive statements of anxiety symptoms which are rated on a 4-point Likert scale with the following correspondence: "Not at all" (0 points); "Mildly; it did not bother me much" (1 point); "Moderately; it was very unpleasant, but I could stand it" (2 points); and "Severely; I could barely stand it" (3 points). BAI total score is a sum of ratings given by the respondent for the 21 symptoms. Total scores from 0-7 points show a minimal level of anxiety; scores of 8-15 indicate mild anxiety; scores of 16-25 reflect moderate anxiety; and scores of 26-63 indicate severe anxiety¹³.

Inclusion criteria for the study were Muslim students, willingness to participate. While exclusion criteria were students with any previous psychiatric illness, receiving any medication for it, currently practicing meditation/yoga and participation in any stress/anxiety relieving program. Incomplete responses were also excluded. Written consent was taken from eligible participants (n=65) and they were added to a WhatsApp group, where the audio material of Surah Ar-Rahman was provided. Participants were asked to listen to the audio of Surah Ar-

Rahman for 6 consecutive days, twice a day. At the end of therapy sessions, participants were asked to fill the post-therapy questionnaire. They were classified into two categories based on number of therapy sessions they had taken. Category 1 was assigned to the participants who took 1-6 sessions and Category 2 to the participants who took 7-12 sessions. The Anonymity of each participant was maintained. Data was analyzed by using SPSS version 25, including descriptive analysis, cross-tabulation.s, and tests of median difference (Wilcoxon signed rank and Mann Whitney tests). A p-value of <0.05 was considered significant.

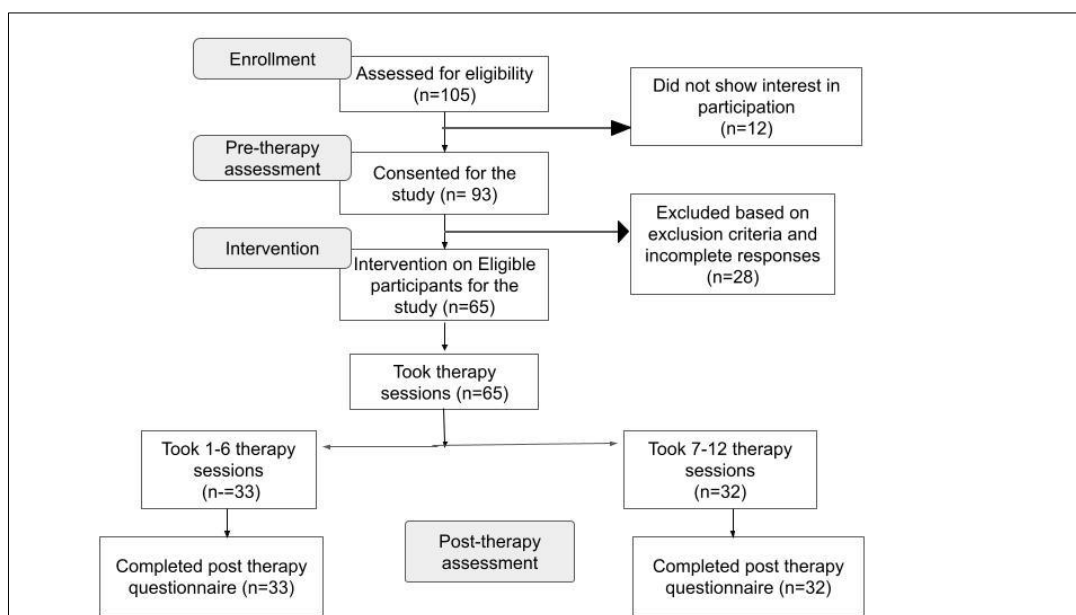


Figure 1. Matherial and Methods

3. RESULTS

The study flowchart is given in Figure 1. Demographic profile of the participants, showed following distribution; females n=53 (81.5%) and males n=12 (18.5%); day scholars n=51 (78.5%) and hostellers n=14(21.5%).

The study analysis found that the percentage of participants having severe anxiety decreased from 24.6% (pre-therapy) to 3.1% (post-therapy). Anxiety scores of majority of the participants were shifted to the minimal levels shown by 58.5% (post-therapy), **Table 1**.

Table 1: Frequency distribution based on Anxiety levels before and after the intervention

	Anxiety levels							
	Minimal (0-7)		Mild (8-15)		Moderate (16-24)		Severe (26-63)	
	N	%	N	%	n	%	N	%
Before intervention	15	23.1	17	26.2	17	26.2	16	24.6
After intervention	38	58.5	18	27.7	7	10.8	2	3.1

Among the various symptoms enlisted in BAI; 3 symptoms were ranked at 'points 3' (severely) by the following frequency distribution of participants before the intervention; Fear of worst happening by 10, Heart pounding by 13; Indigestion or discomfort in the abdomen by 11 participants. Whereas this frequency decreased after the intervention; 2 participants ranked fear of worst happening at '3 points'; only 1 ranked heart pounding; 4 ranked indigestion or discomfort in the abdomen at 'severely' (3 points).

Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied to identify the median difference between pre-therapy anxiety levels and post-therapy anxiety levels in both categories separately. **Table 2** represents the results of the applied test which showed statistically significant difference between the medians of pre-therapy and post-therapy anxiety levels, indicated by p-value <0.05 (p = 0.000) in both categories.

Table 2: Difference b/w pre therapy and post therapy anxiety (Wilcoxon signed-rank test)

Therapy sessions taken	Anxiety scores	Median	p-value
1-6	Before intervention	11	0.000
	After intervention	5	
7-12	Before intervention	17	0.000
	After intervention	7	

To find the difference in medians of anxiety levels in participants who took 1-6 sessions and participants who took 7-12 sessions, Mann-Whitney U test was applied. According to the outcome of the test, there is no statistical difference in anxiety levels between participants who took 1-6 therapy sessions and who took 7-12 therapy sessions, indicated by p-value > 0.05 (**table 3**).

Table 3: Difference between anxiety scores in two categories of participants (Mann-Whitney U test)

Anxiety score	Therapy sessions taken	p-value
Before intervention	1-6	0.149
	7-12	
After intervention	1-6	0.457
	7-12	

13 participants had taken the therapy in the past. The Test of median difference was applied which showed p-value of >0.05 indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the anxiety between participants who took Surah Ar-Rahman therapy and those who had not taken the therapy previously. No statistical difference was found in anxiety between males and females; hostilities and day scholars before and after intervention indicated by p-value >0.05 .

4. DISCUSSION

Surah Ar-Rahman therapy is one of the effective therapies in the management of anxiety. This therapy was chosen instead of the other anxiety-relieving therapies keeping in view the feasibility of application and acceptance level of the Muslim population. Surah Ar-Rahman describes the attributes of Allah Almighty beautifully. It covers the endless favors of Allah Almighty on His creation, and listening to its recitation brings gratitude and humility to the heart of a Muslim.

The results of this study showed that the majority of the respondents were females (81.5%) and day scholars (78.5%). The study showed the percentage of participants having severe anxiety decreased from 24.6% (pre-therapy) to 3.1% (post-therapy). A study conducted at Kabir Medical College evaluated the mean of anxiety before and after treatment as 16.5 and 8.90 respectively¹⁴. A Study conducted by Rianti et al. suggested similar decreasing trends in anxiety depicted by; mean anxiety before intervention: 11.49; mean anxiety after intervention: 4.93¹⁵.

Statistical significant difference was obtained (p value 0.000) between pre-therapy and post-therapy anxiety scores within each category which reflects the positive effect of listening to Surah Ar-Rahman on decreasing anxiety of 2nd year medical students. Waheed et al. set to explore the effects of Surah Ar-Rahman therapy on stress, anxiety and depression of undergraduate medical students of Peshawar Medical College concluded with similar findings reinforcing the results of the current study¹⁴. Saleem et al. looked at the efficacy of Surah Ar-Rahman therapy and relaxation music on cortisol levels of medical students and inferred that listening to Surah Al-Rahman has statistically more significant effect on decreasing cortisol levels and stress scores in comparison to Relaxation Music¹².

Reduction in symptoms associated with anxiety e,g 'fear of worst happening, heart pounding and indigestion or discomfort in the abdomen', suggests effects of Surah Ar-Rahman therapy on physiological parameters of the body.

There was no statistical significant difference found in anxiety scores between the two categories (p-value >0.05), depicting the positive effect of Surah Ar-Rahman therapy on mitigating anxiety irrespective of number of sessions taken. The Degree of anxiety reduction by therapy was same in males and females; hostellers and day scholars as indicated by p-value>0.05. This indicates that Surah Ar-Rahman therapy has a powerful impact in reducing anxiety, regardless of the gender and mode of living of the participants.

The research sample exclusively comprised Muslims, selected based on their level of faith and dedication to reciting and listening to Quranic verses. Anxiety stands out as a significant factor affecting the academic performance and competence of medical students. Medical students exhibit a higher susceptibility to anxiety and mental health issues compared to other professionals¹¹. The findings indicate a notable reduction in anxiety levels among second-year medical students following the implementation of Surah Ar-Rahman therapy.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that Surah-Ar-Rahman therapy is effective technique in reducing anxiety in 2nd year MBBS Students. Thus, this study suggests that Surah-Rahman should be played in medical education institutes for students and sessions related to the healing power of the therapy should be conducted regularly. This will equip them to cope with the stressful academic curriculum and have healthy social interactions with patients, and colleagues. Although this Study has some limitations such as: small sample size and no control group.

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