

Spiritual Health in the Iranian Elderly: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Considering the increase in the elderly population of the country, it is essential to pay attention to different aspects of their health including their spiritual health and the factors affecting it. The present study is an attempt to achieve a comprehensive outlook of the status of spiritual health in the Iranian elderly and the influential factors in this regard.

Methods: This is a systematic review and search. At the end of July, 2019, English and Persian articles were searched and read on the PubMed, Google Scholar, Iranian journals database, Jihad Daneshgahi Database Center, and Noormags using the keywords 'elderly', 'spiritual well-being', 'elderly', 'older people', 'older adult', 'aged', 'senior', 'Iran', and 'spiritual health'. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 34 related articles were included in the study. The authors reported no conflicts of interest in the present study.

Results: Out of the articles included in the study, 17 articles had examined the relationship between spiritual health and psychological factors, seven studies had described the status of spiritual health, four had examined the relationship between spiritual health and the quality of life and three studies had studied the relationship between successful old age, prayers and blood sugar control. Three studies were interventional examining the effect of telling memories, spiritual care and spiritual intervention on spiritual health of the elderly. Furthermore, in more than 90% of the studies, *Palotzin and Ellison's* Spiritual Health questionnaire had been used for assessing spiritual health and in most of the studies the spiritual health score has been evaluated as medium.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, it can be stated that promoting spiritual health in the elderly can be effective in improving their mental health, quality of life and sense of satisfaction in life. The results related to the relationship between demographic features and spiritual health were paradoxical in some cases. Therefore, there is a need to develop and use a more appropriate instrument well-suited to this age group and the Iranian-Islamic culture for evaluating and assessing spiritual health in the elderly.

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Summary

Background and Objective

Health and medical advancement in the second half of the twentieth century has led to increased

longevity of human beings. According to the statistics presented by the World Health Organization, the world's elderly population, 60 years and older, was 600 million by 2000 and this number is going to reach 1.2 billion people by 2025 (1). Based on the results from the last census in Iran in 2016, Iran's elderly population (60 years and older) is more than 7400000 accounting for 9.2% of the whole population (2). Considering the increasing elderly population, there is a need to pay a particular attention to this age group and it is essential to develop plans to satisfy their needs and improve their life (3). Given the importance of this issue, some studies have been conducted on spiritual health during the recent years. The present study is a systematic review of the studies on spiritual health of Iranian elderly population. It describes the status of health and the factors affecting spiritual health in this age group in Iran and summarizes and compares the results with the previous studies in this regard. The results can be helpful in designing the future studies related to the spiritual health of the elderly and prevent non-applied repetitive studies.

Methods

This is a descriptive study carried out by systematic search and review of the studies and library sources. For this purpose, the related articles were reviewed by searching in English and Persian databases using keywords of 'elderly', 'spiritual well-being', 'elderly', 'older people', 'older adult', 'aged', 'senior', 'Iran', and 'spiritual health'. In the first search was conducted at the end of July, 2019 and the studies carried out by 22nd of July, 2019 were analyzed. In the initial search, 1048 studies were found. After eliminating the repetitions and unrelated studies, 155 studies were left. At this phase, the abstracts of the remaining studies were read to find their relevance to the spiritual health of the elderly and, finally, by excluding further unrelated articles, 81 articles were found. These articles were completely read and the studies that were not matched with the inclusion criteria were removed. Finally, 34 studies were included in the study. The related articles were categorized based on the research questions.

Results

After screening and removing repetitive and unrelated studies, a total number of 34 articles were included in the study. Geographically, the studies have been conducted in 16 provinces in the country. In most of the studies (94.1%) the participants had been selected from male and

female elderly. 91.2% of the studies have used *Palotzin and Ellison's* Spiritual Health questionnaire.

In 29 studies, the score related to the elderly spiritual health has been reported; 27 studies reported medium scores, one study reported high and one reported low scores related to spiritual health. In most of the studies, the level of education was not correlated with spiritual health. In addition, most of the studies showed a significant relationship between spiritual health and life quality of the elderly.

Three studies were interventional. The interventions included telling memories, spiritual/religious intervention and spiritual care. The results of these studies pointed to effectiveness of the interventions in improving the elderly spiritual health. Three studies also examined the relationship of spiritual health with successful old age, prayers and blood sugar control showing a significant correlation between spiritual health and the first two (i.e., successful old age and prayers) but no correlation with blood sugar control.

Conclusion

The results of our analysis showed that the studies have been conducted in 16 provinces and no studies have been carried out in almost half of the provinces. As spiritual health is influenced by individuals' local culture (4), the studies cannot reveal the status of spiritual health in the elderly in Iran.

The results further showed that 31 studies had used *Palotzin and Ellison's* Spiritual Health questionnaire. Given the fact that there is an inseparable relationship between spiritual health cultural and social background of individuals (5), the researchers need to reconsider the use of a questionnaire that has been developed 35 years ago based on the western culture and Christianity to assess the status of spiritual health in Iranian Muslim elderly in more than 90% of the studies. Another finding of the study was that spiritual health can play an important role in spiritual health of the elderly. In other words, spirituality and religion act as protective forces against the problems and discomforts and reduce mental disorders and promote the elderly mental health (6).

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Ethical considerations

The article was based on a study confirmed in Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences with the code IR. SBMU. RETECH. REC. 1397, 303.

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Conflict of interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest in this study.

Author's contributions

Searching the articles, data coding and analysis and writing the article draft: first, second and third authors; editing and classifying the information: fourth author; supervising the research project: fifth author.

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الصحة الروحية لدى المسنين الإيرانيين: مراجعة منهجية

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الملخص

خلفية البحث وأهدافه: نظراً لارتفاع عدد المسنين في البلاد، يبدو أنه من الضروري إيلاء الاهتمام إلى الأبعاد المختلفة للصحة، بما في ذلك الصحة الروحية والعوامل المرتبطة بها. تم إجراء هذه الدراسة للوصول إلى رؤية شاملة للصحة الروحية لدى المسنين الإيرانيين والعوامل ذات الصلة.

منهجية البحث: هذه الدراسة من نوع المراجعة المنهجية. في أغسطس عام ١٣٩٨ تمت مراجعة البحوث الفارسية والانجليزية في قواعد بيانات PubMed، Science Direct، Google Scholar وقاعدة بيانات منشورات الدولة وقاعدة بيانات مركز المعلومات العلمية التابعة للجهاد الجامعي و Noormags مستخدماً الكلمات المفتاحية التالية: Spiritual Well-being, elderly, older, Spiritual Health people, older adult, aged, senior, Iran وكذلك الكلمات التالية: "الصحة الروحية" و"الرعاية الروحية" و"المسن" و"كبار السن" و"إيران". تم إدخال ٣٤ مقالة ذات الصلة إلى البحث وفقاً لمعايير الدخول والخروج. لم يبلغوا مؤلفو البحث عن أي تضارب في المصالح.

الكشوفات: من بين المقالات التي دخلت في الدراسة، تمت دراسة سبعة عشر مقالة فيما تختص بالصحة الروحية والعوامل النفسية، وسبعة مقالات تصف حالة الصحة الروحية، وأربع مقالات تناول العلاقة بين الصحة الروحية وجودة الحياة وكذلك ثلاث مقالات تقوم بدراسة الشيخوخة الناجحة والدعاء وضبط مستوى السكر في الدم لدى المسنين. كما تمت دراسة ثلاث مقالات بطريقة المداخل، عن تأثير حكاية الذكريات الماضية والرعاية الروحية والمداخلة الروحية على الصحة الروحية للمسنين. وإضافة إلى هذا تم استخدام استبيان "بالوتزين" و"اليسون" في ٩٠٪ من الدراسات وذلك لغرض قياس الصحة الروحية وفي معظم الدراسات، تم تقييم معدل درجة الصحة الروحية كمتوسط.

الاستنتاج: وفقاً للكشوفات، يمكن القول أن تعزيز الصحة الروحية في المسنين يستطيع أن يؤثر في الصحة النفسية ومستوى جودة الحياة والرضا عن الحياة. كانت النتائج في بعض الأحيان متضاربة في دراسة العلاقة بين الخصائص الديموغرافية والصحة الروحية؛ ولهذا ومن أجل تقييم الصحة الروحية لدى كبار السن، ينبغي تصميم وتنفيذ آلية مناسبة لهذه الفئة العمرية وأيضاً منطبقة مع ثقافة المجتمع الإيراني.

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سلامت معنوی در سالمندان ایرانی: مرور نظام‌مند

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چکیده

سابقه و هدف: با توجه به افزایش جمعیت سالمندان در کشور، توجه به ابعاد مختلف سلامتی از جمله سلامت معنوی و عوامل مرتبط با آن ضروری به نظر می‌رسد. این مطالعه با هدف دستیابی به دیدی جامع از سلامت معنوی سالمندان ایرانی و عوامل مرتبط با آن انجام شده است.

روش کار: این مطالعه از نوع مروری و جست‌وجوی نظام‌مند است. در مرداد ماه سال ۱۳۹۸ مرور مقالات فارسی و انگلیسی در پایگاه‌های پایمد، ساینس دایرکت، گوگل اسکولار، بانک اطلاعات نشریات کشور، پایگاه مرکز اطلاعات علمی جهاد دانشگاهی و نورمگز با کلیدواژه‌های Iran, Spiritual Well-being, elderly, older people, older adult, aged, senior, Spiritual Health و همچنین سلامت معنوی، بهزیستی معنوی، سالمند، سالخورده، پیر، مسن و ایران انجام شد و با توجه به معیارهای ورود و خروج ۳۴ مقاله مرتبط وارد پژوهش شد. مؤلفان مقاله هیچ‌گونه تضاد منافی درباره این پژوهش گزارش نکرده‌اند.

یافته‌ها: از میان مقالاتی که وارد مطالعه شد، در ۱۷ مقاله به بررسی رابطه سلامت معنوی با عوامل روان‌شناختی، هفت مقاله به توصیف وضعیت سلامت معنوی، چهار مقاله به بررسی رابطه سلامت معنوی و کیفیت زندگی و سه مقاله به بررسی سالمندی موفق، دعا و کنترل قند خون در سالمندان پرداخته شده است. سه مقاله نیز به صورت مداخله‌ای تأثیر خاطره‌گویی، مراقبت معنوی و مداخله معنوی را بر سلامت معنوی سالمندان بررسی کرده است. علاوه بر این، در بیش از ۹۰ درصد مطالعات برای سنجش سلامت معنوی از پرسش‌نامه پالوتزین و الیسون استفاده شده و در بیشتر مطالعات میانگین نمره سلامت معنوی متوسط ارزیابی شده است.

نتیجه‌گیری: بر اساس یافته‌ها می‌توان گفت که ارتقای سلامت معنوی در سالمندان می‌تواند در سلامت روانی، کیفیت زندگی و رضایت آنان مؤثر باشد. نتایج به‌دست‌آمده در بررسی رابطه ویژگی‌های جمعیت‌شناختی و سلامت معنوی بعضاً متناقض بود؛ از این‌رو لازم است برای ارزیابی دقیق سلامت معنوی در سالمندان ابزار متناسب با این گروه سنی و فرهنگ جامعه ایرانی و اسلامی طراحی و اجرا شود.

واژگان کلیدی:

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