



The Effect of Spiritual Therapy on The Emotion Regulation of Caregivers of Mental Disorder Clients: A Systematic Review

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Abstract:

Background: Schizophrenic client caregivers are faced with various problems caused by the abnormal behavior of schizophrenic clients that can trigger stress. The stress experienced by the schizophrenia client caregiver is indicated by the decrease in emotional control which has an impact on the treatment of schizophrenic clients. Objective: To determine the effectiveness of spiritual care in improving the emotional regulation of caregiver clients with schizophrenia. Methods: The sources of the articles used were obtained from searches through the Scopus database, Science Direct, and Proquest. The search for articles is limited from 2019 to 2023. After the articles are obtained, they are then reviewed until the stage of making a systematic review. The keywords used in the article search were "spiritual care", "Emotional Regulation" and "Caregiver". This systematic review uses 15 articles that fit the inclusion criteria. Results: The spiritual care intervention from the reviewed research is very significant in increasing the emotional regulation of the caregiver in schizophrenic clients. Conclusion: A spiritual care strategy can increase emotional regulation and a calm attitude so that it will have a good impact on the recovery process for schizophrenic clients. Recommendation: We recommend spiritual care strategies to be implemented by health workers in the community as an intervention to improve the caregiver's ability to improve emotional regulation.

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INTRODUCTION

Providing care for individuals with mental health disorders can be emotionally and physically challenging, often leading to significant stress, burnout, and emotional instability for caregivers (Kalhovde & Kitzmüller, 2024). Caregivers often encounter emotional difficulties such as feelings of helplessness, anxiety, depression, and frustration, which can negatively impact their well-being and the standard of care they offer (Oikonomou, Gkintoni, Halkiopoulos, & Karademas, 2024).

Emotion regulation refers to the methods individuals use to manage their emotions, as well as how they experience and express those emotions (Kozubal, Szuster, & Wielgopalan, 2023). Effective emotion regulation is essential for caregivers as it enables them to handle the intense emotions that come with caregiving. Difficulty in managing emotions can result in negative consequences for both the caregivers and those they are responsible for (Paley & Hajal, 2022).

In recent years, spiritual therapy has become recognized as a possible approach to help caregivers cope with the emotional strain of their role. This form of therapy incorporates spiritual practices, beliefs, and experiences to address stress and emotional difficulties (Rohmi, Yusuf, Fitriyani, & Agustinus, 2023). It may include practices such as prayer, meditation, mindfulness, and participation in religious or spiritual communities (Montero-Marín et al., 2019).

Spirituality has been acknowledged for a long time as a key element of mental well-being, offering individuals a sense of purpose, hope, and a connection to something beyond themselves (Milner, Crawford, Edgley, Hare-Duke, & Slade, 2019). For caregivers, spirituality can provide comfort, strength, and a sense of purpose, aiding them in navigating the difficulties of caregiving. As a result, spiritual therapy has the potential to improve emotion regulation by cultivating inner peace, alleviating anxiety and stress, and encouraging positive emotional well-being (Vigna, de Castro, & Fumis, 2020).

Research has shown that spirituality can have a positive impact on caregivers, leading to better mental health outcomes and stronger coping skills (Sen, Colucci, & Browne, 2021). However, the particular effect of spiritual therapy on emotion regulation among caregivers of individuals with mental disorders has not been thoroughly investigated. Most research has concentrated on caregivers' overall well-being, with little focus on how spiritual therapy might specifically enhance their capacity to regulate emotions within the caregiving context (Reynolds, Jeste, Sachdev, & Blazer, 2022).

This systematic review aims to explore the existing evidence, highlight the potential benefits of spiritual therapy, and identify areas where further research is needed. The findings could have significant implications for the development of supportive interventions and programs designed to assist caregivers in managing the emotional demands of their role.

RESEARCH METHODS

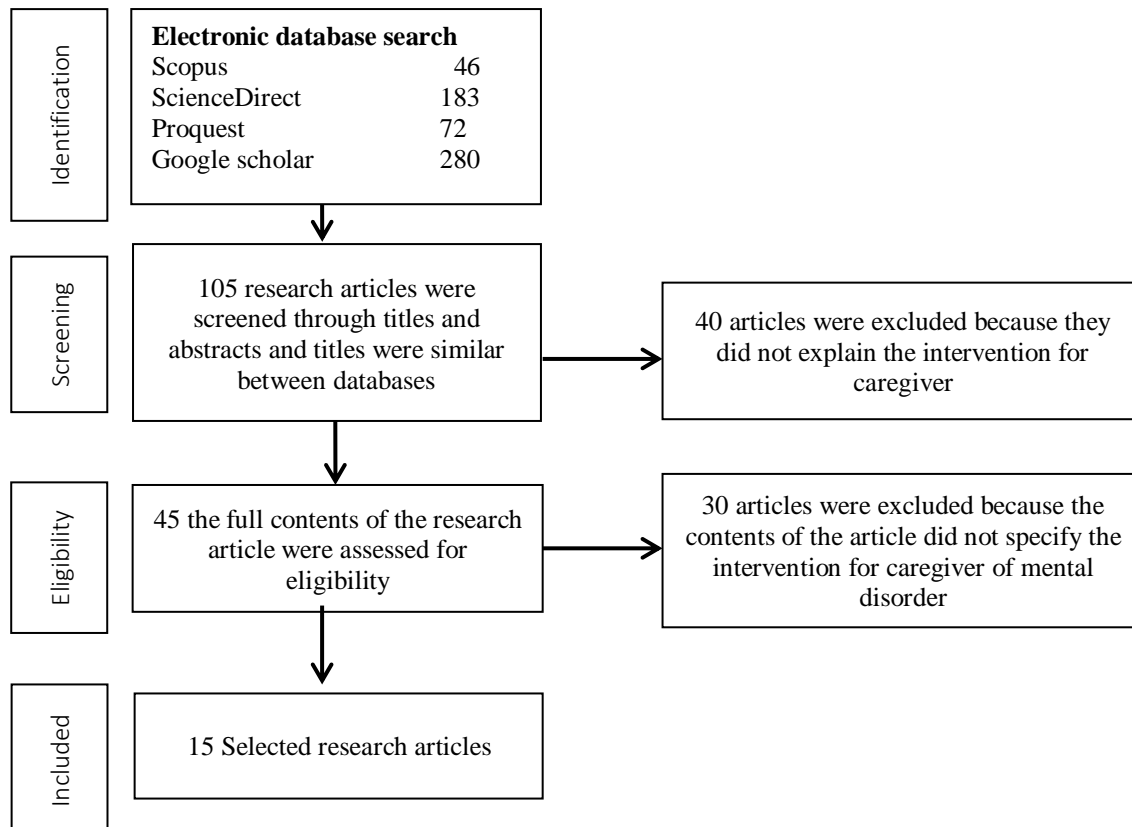
Database searches include Scopus, Google Scholar, Science Direct, and Proquest with the keywords spiritual care, emotional regulation, and schizophrenic client caregiver. The next step is to select articles according to the criteria, namely published in 2019-2023 with full text and in English, in the preparation of this systematic review based on Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). The articles that were found were then synthesized and analyzed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria in this systematic review are (1) caregivers who have family members with schizophrenia. (2) The study that examines spiritual care intervention in caregivers who care for schizophrenic clients, (3) the same study design is quasi-experimental, experimental and randomized controlled trial (RCT), while the exclusion criteria in this systematic review are (1) articles that use qualitative research methods, (2) studies that focus on treating schizophrenic clients without involving caregiver interventions. Search for articles starts from June 2023 to July 2023, with keywords that have been determined by the researcher. The articles found by the researcher were selected according to inclusion and exclusion criteria, with the keywords spiritual care, emotional regulation, and schizophrenic client caregiver. The researcher removes the same articles, examines articles that meet the criteria, and classifies them according to the results of the research to be continued with the discussion

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results:

The initial literature search found 95 articles. Researchers select articles with the same title, then the remaining 105 articles. The screening based on the title was then adjusted to the theme of a systematic review, which resulted in 50 articles. Selection based on abstract were excluded and obtained 40 articles. 40 articles were then selected according to the eligibility criteria and obtained 15 articles which were subsequently used in a systematic review as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Flow diagram and article selection



Research articles are limited from 2019 to 2023. Three articles were published in 2019, three articles were published in 2020, four articles were published in 2021, four articles were published in 2022, and one article was published in 2023. All research articles are quantitative research with a quasi-experimental, experimental, and randomized controlled trial research design. All studies have shown significant results in reducing stress and improving psychological well-being. Spiritual care therapy can improve symptoms of anxiety and depression(Sun, Liu, Zhang, Wang, & Fan, 2021). Spiritual care has the potential to boost the self-efficacy of family caregivers who are caring for individuals with Alzheimer's disease(Meyer et al., 2022). The hope, life satisfaction, and spiritual well-being of elderly patients with mild to moderate dementia can be greatly enhanced (Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2021),and spiritual therapy using techniques such as knowing values and a deep belief in God can decrease social stigma and worry (Mousavi Najafi & Rasouli Jozi, 2019).

This systematic review research study identifies that spiritual care can reduce stress and improve psychological well-being by improving emotion regulation. Ten of the

fifteen studies have shown that spiritual care can reduce stress and improve psychological well-being. Among mental illness, schizophrenic patients have the highest level of burden on their caregivers. Stress causes emotional dysregulation, which in turn affects their psychological and physiological health. Therefore, preventive interventions to reduce stress, anxiety, anger, and depression are very important in reducing the occurrence of other disorders in the caregiver's life, and emotional regulation is one of the factors that have the potential to reduce the incidence of negative emotions in the caregiver

Discussion:

The review highlights that spiritual therapy can have a significant positive impact on emotion regulation among caregivers of mental disorder clients. Several studies demonstrated that engaging in spiritual practices—such as prayer, meditation, mindfulness, and participation in spiritual communities—helped caregivers manage their emotions more effectively (Aggarwal, Wright, Morgan, Patton, & Reavley, 2023). These practices were found to: **Reduce Stress and Anxiety:** Caregivers who engaged in spiritual therapy reported lower levels of stress and anxiety. The sense of inner peace and calmness derived from spiritual practices provided them with a coping mechanism to deal with the emotional challenges of caregiving (Hastari, Yuliadi, & Setyowati, 2020). **Enhance Resilience:** Spiritual therapy contributed to greater resilience, enabling caregivers to bounce back from difficult situations and maintain a positive outlook. This resilience was linked to a deeper sense of purpose and meaning derived from spiritual beliefs (Miller, Addicott, & Rosa, 2023). **Foster Positive Emotional States:** Engaging in spiritual practices often leads to an increase in positive emotions, such as hope, gratitude, and compassion. These emotions helped caregivers to maintain a more balanced emotional state, reducing the likelihood of burnout and emotional exhaustion (Edú-Valsania, Laguía, & Moriano, 2022).

Spiritual therapy offers a holistic approach to managing the emotional demands of caregiving (Kurtgöz & Edis, 2023). By reducing stress, enhancing resilience, fostering positive emotions, and creating a sense of community, spiritual practices provide caregivers with the tools they need to navigate their responsibilities with more emotional balance and less burnout (Kunzler et al., 2020). Given these findings, integrating spiritual therapy into caregiver support programs could be a valuable strategy for improving the mental health and well-being of caregivers, particularly those caring for individuals with mental disorders (Casaleiro, Martins, & Caldeira, 2024).

Implications for Public Health:

Healthcare providers should consider incorporating spiritual therapy as part of holistic care programs for caregivers of mental disorder clients. Tailored spiritual interventions that align with caregivers' beliefs and cultural backgrounds could enhance emotion regulation and improve overall well-being.

Limitations and Future Research:

Although promising, the body of research on the effect of spiritual therapy on emotion regulation among caregivers is still limited. Many studies had small sample sizes, short follow-up periods, and lacked rigorous methodologies, which limits the generalizability of the findings.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review underscores the potential of spiritual therapy to positively influence emotion regulation among caregivers of mental disorder clients. While there are challenges and limitations, the overall evidence suggests that spiritual therapy can be a valuable tool in supporting caregivers, helping them to manage their emotions, reduce stress, and improve their overall well-being. Future research and practice should continue to explore and refine these interventions, ensuring they are accessible, effective, and culturally appropriate for all caregivers

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