

Religious intervention improves comatose patients' level of consciousness



A new study by Iranian researchers supports a growing body of evidence that spirituality is an essential component of patient care. Results of the study showed that the sound of the Quran could improve the level of consciousness of comatose patients in the intensive care unit (ICU), suggesting that the Quranic voice can be used as an easy and practical way to provide spiritual care of patients. The findings are published in the *European Journal of Integrative Medicine*.

Coma is a condition in which the patient has been long unaware of him/herself and the environment. The most common causes of coma in Iran and the world are injuries and various cases of poisoning. Considering the complications of long-term inertia and high cost for the patient and the health system, the rapid recovery of these patients is very important. Hospitalised patients have physical needs in addition to spiritual needs, which can affect the patient's recovery. Previous research has shown that spirituality is an essential component of health and well-being.

In the last decade, some medical team members, psychologists, nurses and sociologists have found that spirituality can have a significant impact on various aspects of medical care. Today, the role of spirituality in improving the health of the patient is more focused, and helping to meet the spiritual needs of patients and their families is considered as an essential element of clinical care.

The Quran is regarded as the central religious text of Islam and referred to as the celestial book of Muslims that covers the entire dimensions of human life. Muslim scholars have used divine verses to treat patients, and in religious texts of Muslims, they have also emphasised the healing effects of Quran verses. Today, some countries and communities have turned to prayer and Quran for the treatment of patients' mental and physical illnesses, as it is now scientifically proven that hearing the sound of the holy Quran can reduce mental stress in human.

Since hearing is the strongest sensation of the five senses and the last sensation that is lost in comatose patients, the Iranian researchers decided to examine the effect of Quranic voice on the level of consciousness in patients with coma condition. The researchers conducted a double-blind randomised clinical trial with 66 comatose patients hospitalised in the ICU who were randomly divided into intervention and control groups. For patients in the intervention group, Surah Raad, with the voice of Master Shahriyar Parhizgar, was broadcast daily for 17 minutes via headphones. The level of consciousness of both groups was recorded before and after the intervention.

Based on the study results, there was no significant difference between the mean level of consciousness in both groups before intervention ($P = 0.13$). After 10 days, the level of consciousness in the intervention group increased significantly ($P = 0.01$). But, the increase in level of consciousness in the control group after intervention (10 days) was not significant ($P = 0.09$).

"The findings of this study showed that the Quran's voice affects the level of consciousness of comatose patients hospitalised in ICU and leads to a progressive increase in the level of consciousness in these patients," the authors write. "This finding can be used in the management of patients in nursing clinics, as well as in nursing education. Spiritual care is considered as comprehensive nursing intervention. At present, this issue is neglected due to the heavy workload of nurses."

This study has some limitations. Because the Quran is the Muslim scripture, and this study was conducted only in Muslim patients from an Iranian cultural background, the authors say the results cannot be generalised to other Muslim populations or to other religions. In addition, the sample size is comparatively small, therefore the present findings must be confirmed in a larger study.

Source: [European Journal of Integrative Medicine](#)

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