

The Effect of Spirituality on Adjustment to Chronic Disease during the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19)

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Abstract

Adjustment to chronic diseases is a fundamental strategy for patients' greater satisfaction with individual and social life, as well as to improve their level of performance and efficiency. In addition to causing biological disorders, these diseases cause problems and mental disorders for patients that reduce their resilience in life. Adaptation to chronic illness reduces abnormal psychological outcomes and increases their life satisfaction. Anxiety, stress and depression caused by chronic diseases in the context of the global corona outbreak, due to the frightening and mysterious nature of the virus, and its high mortality rate, have been added to the anxiety caused by chronic disease. Therefore, in order to adapt to chronic diseases in pandemic conditions, more efforts are needed and it is necessary to revise the traditional protocols and adapt them to the current conditions. Among the factors that are effective in reducing the psychological consequences of chronic diseases, spirituality plays an important role, which is described in this article.

Keywords: Chronic Illness; Spirituality; Adaptation; Covid 19

Introduction

Chronic diseases are associated with the patient for a long time and affect his personal and social life as well as his performance [1]. Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, major depression, MS, cancer and lung disease are examples of chronic diseases. In addition to their biological effects, these diseases also cause psychological disorders that lead to a decrease in a person's positive performance. Depression, stress, generalized anxiety disorder, death anxiety and mood disorders are some of the psychological consequences of chronic illness. These conditions are seen in most patients with chronic disease [2].

Corona virus release

At the end of 2020, the world witnessed the emergence of a terrifying and anxious virus that infected millions, killing many

people. The moment-to-moment coverage of the virus by the media, as well as the anxiety caused by its mystery, caused millions of people to experience stress, acute anxiety and death anxiety. This anxiety is for chronic patients who have an underlying disease for Covid 19; It was doubled. In fact, adapting to chronic diseases in the face of a coronavirus outbreak is more difficult than adapting to chronic diseases under normal circumstances [3]. For this reason, common protocols and coping strategies with these diseases need to be changed and revised in the new context.

Adjustment to chronic disease

One of the strategies to deal with chronic illness that leads to adjustment to a new situation and increases his level of performance is adaptation to chronic illness [4]. In the psychological literature, compromise is relative. The relativity of compatibility is realistic.

Realism means achieving a better life in different situations. In other words, if we consider compromise as an absolute thing, we are in fact depriving ourselves of the ability to adapt to life [5]. Because compromise is a relative matter; In dealing with chronic illness, relative compromise is important. This is a realistic view.

Spirituality as an adaptive strategy

Spirituality is more important than the meaning of life. One who has spirituality sees life as purposeful and beautiful. The spiritual person experiences a greater sense of satisfaction with life [6]. In the Islamic view, spirituality is related to God. According to this view, one who has spirituality must believe in God and follow religious instructions. It is believed that spirituality enhances, and deepens, the meaning of life. In many studies, the effect of spirituality on reducing mental disorders has been observed and emphasized. This effect is due to the kind of attitude that spirituality gives to human beings [7].

In the pandemic and epidemic conditions of the Coronavirus, spirituality has had a great impact on reducing death anxiety and depression in patients. The reason for this is the attitude that the spiritual person has towards the Creator of the world, the universe and life. This belief gives meaning to his life and increases his resilience for a happier life. Pourhosein (2021) in two studies showed that spirituality, as well as religious behavior in reducing depression and anxiety caused by breast cancer, as well as reducing death anxiety, and reducing depression in a person who has lost her wife due to coronavirus, has been effective [8,9].

In their view, life is full of suffering and happiness. Life cannot be considered without suffering and without happiness. They say they do not welcome suffering, but if suffering comes to them, they manage it and do not allow it to dominate them. They also believe that relying on God Almighty will bring them peace [8].

Clinical reports

Here is part of a scientific report on the effect of spirituality in controlling depression caused by grief. A 50-year-old woman with Covid 19 who lost her husband to coronary heart disease says [8]:

- **Looking at life:** (I always think about death and I am not afraid of it. But I also love life very much, I think more of helping others, I think my wife's mourning and illness has been a test for me, so I have to wait).

- **Resilience from spirituality:** (I could not bear the death of my wife and my illness without appealing to God, I am aware that I can endure these sufferings; when I feel sad and depressed, I rest in the remembrance of God; life I was shocked by the death of my wife, but I endured and came back to life).
- **God in life:** (I always feel that God cares for me; when I call on God, I quickly calm down. He hears my inner voice and responds well).

The second report is about an Iranian Muslim woman with breast cancer. She has had breast surgery and is undergoing a difficult course of chemotherapy. He is also scheduled to receive radiation therapy. Behavior and spirituality have increased his adaptation to cancer and Covid-19 conditions [9]:

- **Stress-free experience:** (When I first learned about the disease and its progression, I was not stressed. I just thought it was a new situation in life that I had to experience, so I followed the advice of my oncologist I was accepted for treatment and even surgery).
- **Sickness is a means of human growth:** (I do not welcome disease, but if I get it for any reason, I am not pessimistic about the system of existence and I consider it a means of my spiritual growth. I know that God will help me to endure this disease I always pray for myself and other patients; it is true that breast cancer is harder for a woman than other diseases, but it does not make me lose my spirit).
- **Life is beautiful:** (In the Islamic view, hardship and ease are together and they cannot be separated. What matters is the capacity of man to endure them and turn threats into opportunities. He can enjoy his life).
- **Life goes on:** (No crisis should disappoint us in the way of life. No crisis should diminish our good feelings about life).

Proposal

The effect of spirituality on reducing mental suffering and adaptation to mental patients has been confirmed in many studies, but the effect of spirituality on adaptation in the coronary prevalence situation needs further study. It is recommended that psychology and psychiatry researchers seize the opportunity for coronary heart disease and further study the effect of spirituality on reducing psychological and physical problems. We know that field

research in critical situations must be done quickly so that its findings can be used to adapt to subsequent crises.

Conclusion

Coronavirus is perhaps the biggest, most dangerous and scary phenomenon that has affected the contemporary world. This influence can be seen in all political, economic, cultural, scientific, educational, training and even religious fields. To deal with this dangerous situation, we need to make more accurate findings and revise current protocols. Revision of current protocols requires more research.

Another point is the emphasis on intercultural studies in this field. We need findings that show us the climatic and cultural differences in coping with chronic illness in a crisis situation.

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