

The Effect of Holy Quran Voice on Mental Health

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Abstract This study was designed to determine the effect of Quran listening without its musical tone (Tartil) on the mental health of personnel in Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, southeast of Iran. The results showed significant differences between the test and control groups in their mean mental health scores after Quran listening ($P = 0.037$). No significant gender differences in the test group before and after intervention were found ($P = 0.806$). These results suggest that Quran listening could be recommended by psychologists for improving mental health and achieving greater calm.

Keywords Quran · Mental health · Iran

Introduction

Mental health means staying mentally healthy for a good quality of life (Alipor and Mohamad bigi 1997). Reports show an increasing prevalence of mental illness; various

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reasons have been proposed for this increase (Kimber et al. 2008). Islam's great emphasis on mental health can be traced in Quran's verses and the traditions of the prophet's family (Nasrollahi 2010). Various verses in the Holy Quran directly or indirectly address aspects of mental health (Hamidi et al. 2010). For instance, the Quran contains many verses about achieving tranquility (Mottaghi et al. 2011): Allah says in the Quran, "Be aware that the remembrance of Allah calms the hearts" (Verse 28, AL-Rad 1996).

In recent years, health researchers around the world have studied the effects of Quran reading on stress reduction and the treatment of mental illness (Kazemi et al. 2004; Verse 28, AL-Rad 1996). It has been shown to be effective, for instance, at alleviating anxiety in women prior to cesarean sections (Mirbagher Ajorpaz and Ranjbar 2010). Researchers have also investigated the influence of Quran memorization on mental health (Kimiaee et al. 2012) as well as the effects of hearing of it read aloud (Khadem et al. 2008).

Although various investigations have been conducted on the relationship between reading and memorizing the Quran and various psychological variables (including anxiety and stress), little scientific research has been done on the mental effects of listening to the Quran recited without its musical tone (Tartil). Thus, this study was aimed to investigate the effects of hearing Quran Tartil recitation. This study examined the mental health personnel at Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, in southeast Iran.

Methods

Study Area

This interventional (experimental) study was conducted in Zahedan District as an urban area. It is capital of Sistan–Baluchestan province, located in the southeast of Iran (Fig. 1). Two offices, affiliated with Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, were chosen for this study; province health center, where participants served as the test group, and Zahedan health center, where participants served as the control group.

Participants

In total, 81 participants were randomly selected. Before the investigation, participants were questioned about success and unpleasant events in their lives. Participants with traumatic backgrounds were dismissed from the study and replaced. Also participants who suffered from mental illness were excluded.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The mental health of both the control and test groups was assessed by a standard mental health questionnaire including 12 items. The reliability of the questionnaire was then measured using Cronbach's alpha, which has also been used to test validity in related research (Kazemi et al. 2004). Cronbach's alpha reflected a score of 0.91.

The test group listened to the Quran as Tartil recitation for 15 min every morning for a period of 2 months. The voice Quran reader was broadcast through the building's speakers from 8:15 until 8:30 AM. The reader voice and Quran verses were chosen randomly.

One week after finishing the test, the participants completed the mental health questionnaire again. Their mental health scores were then evaluated, and their pre- and post-test

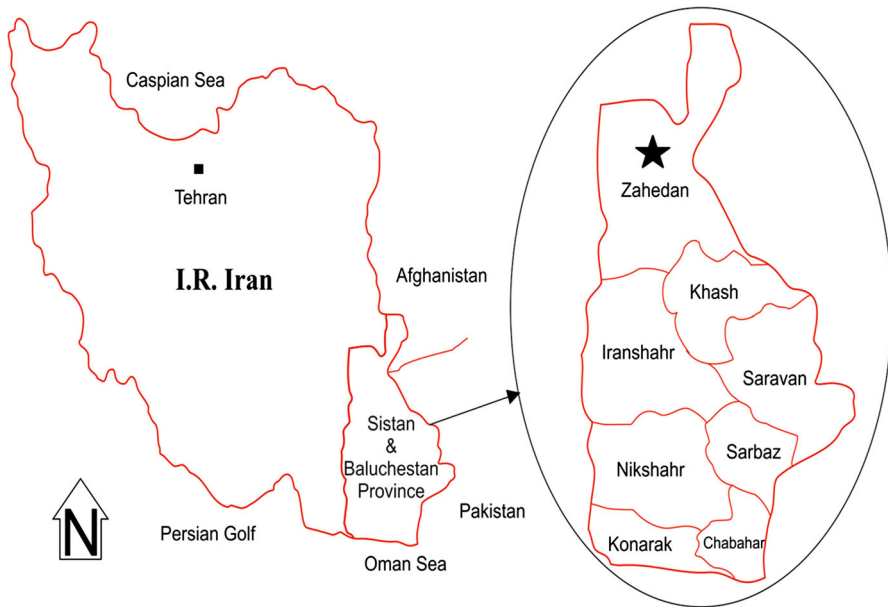


Fig. 1 Map of Sistan–Baluchestan province, southeastern Iran

results were compared. The data were analyzed by SPSS software using the Wilcoxon and Mann–Whitney tests. P values of less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

Results

The mean age of samples was 38.19 ± 9.5 . Table 1 shows the mean mental health scores in the test and control groups before and after the test. The Wilcoxon test indicated significant changes in scores in the test group ($P = 0.001$) but not in the control group ($P = 0.700$).

The Mann–Whitney test did not show significant differences between the test and control groups in the mean mental health scores before intervention ($P = 0.154$), but showed significant differences between them after intervention ($P = 0.037$).

The Mann–Whitney test indicated no significant differences between genders in case group before and after the test (Table 2).

Discussion

Nowadays, some researchers emphasize that the problems of contemporary humankind are due to the lack of religion and ethical values (Sadeghi 2011). However, a religious and Quranic orientation is the basis of the Muslim lifestyle (Atarodi et al. 2013). Because the Quran is a divine and scripture book aimed at human spiritual guidance (Sadeghi 2011), it has important advice and recommendations for human well-being in both worldly life and the afterlife (Asgari et al. 2012). Furthermore, many verses contain guidelines for

Table 1 The mean score of mental health in the test and control groups before and after intervention

Studied groups	Intervention status	Mean	SD	<i>P</i> value
Case group	Before intervention	34.15	7.68	0.001
	After intervention	41.10	4.96	
Control group	Before intervention	36.95	6.83	0.700
	After intervention	37.56	6.48	

Table 2 The mean score of mental health base on gender in case group before and after intervention

	Before intervention		After intervention	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mean	35.41	32.00	41.30	4.71
SD	6.45	9.59	5.13	4.99
<i>P</i> value	0.365		0.806	

achieving mental health and reducing human suffering and stress. As mentioned by a prophet of the Quran, “Be aware that the remembrance of Allah calms the hearts” (Atarodi et al. 2013; Verse 17, Asra 1996; Verse 28, AL-Rad 1996).

Indeed, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that Islamic countries provide booklet containing Quran verses connected to mental health. This decision was made during the Regional Mental Health Summit held in 1998 in the Eastern Mediterranean region (Mottaghi et al. 2011).

During the past two decades, various studies have been conducted on the Quran and medical sciences, especially psychology, in Iran (Sadeghi; Ebrahimi 2011; Jamilian 2012; Siahpoosh 2012). Our study showed that listening to the Quran recited without its musical tone (Tartil) has positive effect on the mental health and can increase its score. These results are consistent with those of other studies that have indicated the benefits of Quran listening on mental health. A study conducted on nursing students, for instance, showed that the mean mental health score significantly increased in the test group after Quran listening (Kazemi et al. 2004). Another investigation confirmed that Quran recitation can reduce the level of anxiety in athletes (Mottaghi et al. 2011). In addition, the benefits of Quran memorization on mental health have been indicated by research showing that Quran memorizers had better mental health, particularly in the areas of anxiety, sleep disorders, depression, and social function (Kimiaee et al. 2012). Another study compared the effects of listening to Quran recitation and music on intrauterine insemination (IUI). This study showed a significant difference between the effects of hearing Quran recitation and music before, during, and after IUI, with Quran recitation having a more positive effect than music on infertility treatment by intrauterine insemination (Khadem et al. 2008).

Conclusion

According to the results, broadcasting of voice Quran reader through the offices building’s speakers at the beginning of work time can be suggested for betterment of personnel’s mental health.

This is basic research for promotion of mental health, and more studies are necessary for integration of Quran reading or listening with other medical and psychiatric treatment. Taken together, Quran listening can be recommended by psychologists for improving mental health and achieving greater calm.

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Conflict of interest The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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