

# Cultural-based intervention for psychotic using spiritual therapy in Madura, Indonesia: a case report

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## Abstract

**Background:** Psychosis is a serious mental illness with an incidence of roughly 7 per 1000 Indonesians in 2018. With Indonesia's diverse cultures, one of them is the classification of psychotic patients as "mad people," as well as therapy efforts to visit kyai, or wise people. **Objective:** A case study of the Bani Amrini House in Bangkalan, Madura, Indonesia, which used a spiritual therapy strategy to treat schizophrenic patients. **Discussion:** The Madurese community's culture, which is predominantly Islamic, believes in using a spiritual method to heal diseases, particularly mental disorders. Prayer, dhikr, istighfar, reading the Al-Qur'an, and mindfulness are all examples of spiritual approaches in Islam. According to scientific evidence, the spiritual approach can reduce anxiety, boost calm, improve well-being, and stimulate the "happy hormone" or endorphins, all of which can assist persons with schizophrenia improve their clinical symptoms. **Conclusion:** Spiritual therapy approaches can be introduced by considering the appropriateness of the place and/or local culture, as well as the necessity for educational approaches to minimize stigma, improve psychotic symptoms, and improve patients quality of life.

Keywords: Psychotic; Stigma; Mental Health; Spiritual Therapy; Madura; Indonesia

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## 1. Introduction

Psychosis is a serious mental illness marked by delusions, unintended hallucinations, or a combination of the two. (Arciniegas, 2015) In 2018, the prevalence of serious mental diseases in Indonesia was around 7 per 1,000 people, up four times over the previous year's figure of 1.7 per 1,000 people in 2013. (Riset Kesehatan Dasar 2018, 2018)

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with a diverse cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious landscape. Each region has its own distinct traits, such as the partial implementation of sharia law in Aceh, Hindu rituals in daily life in Bali, or Madura's carok culture. Indonesian culture is an Eastern culture that is characterized by adherence to current conventions, religious devotion, and communal life. Madura Island, which is part of the East Java Province, is one of the places of Indonesia.

Madurese people frequently assume that if someone exhibits psychotic symptoms, they are insane (eg. talking to themselves, laughing to themselves, walking aimlessly, shouting, muttering mouths, behaving violently for no reason, etc.) jinn disturbance, trance, witchcraft or witchcraft exposure. (Dartiningih et al., 2020) The individual will be regarded as "mad people." This stigma prevents people from seeking help and, as a result, the patients quality of life worsen. (Degnan et al., 2021) Stigmatization of psychotic patients stems from attitudes (prejudice) and behaviour (discrimination) toward psychotics. (Baba et al., 2017) The Madurese

community's culture believes that life's difficulties are inextricably linked to Islamic ideals. Most Madurese people seek therapy from kyai, or wise people, because of this concept. (Zaini, 2021)

## 2. Case report

Since 1982, the Bani Amrini Panti (House) in Bangkalan has been treating individuals with psychotic disorders. This house is run by a kyai who uses spiritual therapy such as praying, listening to or reading the Al-Qur'an, drinking prayed-water, and being bathed by reading prayers at specific times. The concept that healing comes from God and that man's responsibility is to attempt is central to applied therapy. Spiritual therapy is used to entice psychotic individuals to seek treatment because the family believes that the treatment they receive is consistent with the values of the Islamic religion they practice. Initially, only patients in the immediate vicinity of the house were treated, but word of mouth from patients who had recovered led to the expansion of the program to other places. The house's therapist was maintained by his children with the same type of therapy when the kyai died.

Since 2016, the house has partnered with the Bangkalan Health Office to have Public health center workers visit the house once a month. Currently, the house has 34 patients, ranging in age from teenagers to the elderly. All of the patients were schizophrenic. Patients will be assessed by the nursing team, who will prescribe antipsychotic medicines and/or benzodiazepines to treat anxiety and other psychotic symptoms, which will be combined with spiritual counseling. Patients who are extremely anxious or have a tendency to flee will be subjected to mechanical constraint, such as having their legs chained, in addition to receiving psychopharmaceuticals. Even if there has been medical intervention, the house's motto, "Treat with repentance, contemplate while conducting dhikr," is still preserved.

When compared to spiritual healing alone, psychopharmaceuticals shorten treatment time. Spiritual treatment enhances the effects of psychopharmaceuticals, resulting in a calmer patient. However, because there is no record of the patient's status before and after admission to the house, objective statistics cannot be collected. The kyai sets the criteria for healing, and the private sector's staff assists the kyai in making judgments.

## 3. Discussion

The Madurese population still has a strong belief in using the services of a shaman to heal a condition (particularly mental diseases). Madurese shamans are Madurese locals known as ki, kyai, ustadz, or clever people, who treat maladies with various materials in the hopes of healing the patient's illness. This idea arises because people believe their family members are possessed by jinn and exhibit uncontrollable behavior, despite the fact that this is a psychiatric condition that requires a bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual approach to treatment. (Dartiningsih et al., 2020) Patients with psychotic illness don't obtain effective treatment, relapse frequently, and are stigmatized as "mad people" due to the Madurese community's beliefs and lack of education.

The Madurese community, which is overwhelmingly Muslim (99.41%) (Kementerian Agama Jawa Timur, 2014), believes that their problems are inextricably linked to Islamic ideals. Because of this concept, the majority of Madurese people execute rituals, which are spiritual therapy treatments carried out through the use of Kyai, or wise people, as a kind of treatment. (Zaini, 2021) Praying, dhikr, istighfar, reading or listening to the

Al-Qur'an, and mindfulness therapy with a spiritual approach are all examples of Islamic spiritual therapy. (Triyani et al., 2019)

According to research by Uyun, et al. (2019), praying through reading istighfar and begging God's pardon can reduce anxiety, promote calm, and increase well-being. According to a hadith, Whoever persists in asking for forgiveness, Allah will grant him relief from every worry, and a way out from every hardship, and will grant him provision from (sources) he could never imagine (Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith: 3819). This is referred to as "soul purification". (Uyun et al., 2019)

Reading and listening to the Al-Qur'an can cause endorphins, commonly known as "happiness hormones," to be released in the brain, which affect the emotional system, immunological system, and body's ability to fight sickness. (Koczy et al., 2019; Uyun et al., 2019) Beta-endorphins (BE) levels in schizophrenia patients are higher than in healthy people. BE concentrations increased in patients with negative symptoms, whereas positive symptoms were effectively reduced, according to research conducted by Urban-Kowalczyk, et al (2021) on schizophrenia patients who underwent antipsychotic medication for 6 weeks. The interplay between dopaminergic transmission and endogenous opioids is reflected in changes in BE concentrations in individuals taking antipsychotic medication. High amounts of BE, on the other hand, can cause negative symptoms to persist, therefore it must be examined and monitored during therapy. (Urban-Kowalczyk et al., 2019, 2021)

EEG alterations may occur as a result of Spiritual Qur'anic and Emotional Freedom Technique (SQEFT) therapy (EEG). Rosyanti, et al. (2019) found that SQEFT therapy considerably reduced the value of the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS), implying that schizophrenia sufferers' clinical symptoms diminished. (Rosyanti et al., 2019) This occurs because there is an increase in alpha power when listening to the Al-Qur'an, indicating that the subject is in a relaxed condition with high brain activity. As a result, listening to the Al-Qur'an recitation has a relaxing effect on the mind. (Jaludin & Amin, 2019; Rosyanti et al., 2019) When participants were encouraged to listen to and view films of Al-Qur'an recitation with meaning, alpha waves in the right frontal lobe were active but subsequently diminished. Listening to the Al-Qur'an recitation can turn bad emotions into positive ones, and repeating these actions can help the subject become emotionally stable. (Dollah et al., 2019; S. A. Y. Al-Galal, I. F. T. Alshaikhli, 2015)

At the genetic level, therapy with the Spiritual Qur'anic and Emotional Freedom Technique (SQEFT) can have an impact. DRD2 is involved in dopaminergic hyperactivity in people with schizophrenia. DRD2 is overexpressed in the striatum and increases postsynaptically. SQEFT treatment can lower DRD2 mRNA expression and is well tolerated, making it ideal for persistent schizophrenia patients. (Rosyanti et al., n.d.)

According to Turner & Hodge (2020), spiritual intervention results were linked to lower levels of psychotic symptoms. (Turner & Hodge, 2020) Religious principles and beliefs can help people with mental health issues. (Uyun et al., 2019) Mindfulness treatment can also be used in conjunction with spiritual ideals. By establishing a sense of love, acceptance, and patience, Muslims can achieve spiritual mindfulness (Ardinata et al., 2019). Early on in psychosis, mindfulness can help patients regulate their emotions and anxieties, and later on, mindfulness can help schizophrenic patients with unpleasant symptoms. Patients can detect their

problems because mindfulness helps them acquire control over their thoughts and emotions. (Ardinata et al., 2019; Ganguly, 2018)

#### 4. Conclusion

Psychotherapy for individuals with psychosis should be customized to the patient's location or culture. Certain views about psychotic patients, which are accompanied by a severe stigma, can hinder them from receiving effective treatment, lowering their quality of life.

The Madurese, who believe that life's difficulties cannot be separated from Islamic beliefs, have a tough time receiving medical treatment, particularly if the condition is mental. Furthermore, they are not provided with an education. To encourage psychotic patients and their families to seek therapy, the correct method is required, one of which is a spiritual approach.

Spiritual therapy, in addition to psychopharmaceuticals, can be implemented as an extra therapy for psychotics, particularly in locations where there is a strong spiritual coping mechanism. Praying, dhikr, istighfar, reading or listening to the Al-Qur'an, and mindfulness therapy with a spiritual approach are all examples of Islamic spiritual therapy. Spiritual treatment can reduce psychotic symptoms by releasing endorphins, boosting the power of alpha waves in the brain, and reducing the expression of DRD2 mRNA.

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