

## **The Prayer Impact on Exam Anxiety in the Students Who Participated in Communal Prayer Compared to Those Who Did Not in Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences in the Academic Year 2015-2016**

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**ABSTRACT:** Introduction: Prayer is actually an act of worship which is considered the pillar of religion in Islam. Prayer is held in two communal and individual forms. However, communal prayer is preferable and in fact makes a correlation and harmony among people which in turn leads to peace of mind. In today's world, stress and anxiety are considered a problem. Exam anxiety during the education is one of the students' problems to deal with which the students are somehow looking for a solution. Methodology: This descriptive-analytic study was conducted to examine the prayer impact on exam anxiety in the students who participated in the communal prayer compared to those who did not in Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences in the academic year 2015-2016. The students were divided into two groups A and B. Group A included the students who participated in the communal prayer and Group B included the students who did not participate in the communal prayer. A checklist containing demographic variables and Sarason Anxiety Inventory were used to collect data. Finally, data were analyzed using SPSS Software. Results: Sixty four students of 17 to 28 years old participated in this study. Data analysis showed that the mean anxiety score in Group A was less than B. Conclusion: According to the study results, communal prayer can be a factor to reduce the exam anxiety among the students.

### **Introduction**

More than 122 verses were revealed on prayer in the Holy Quran. This shows the importance and dignity of prayer to the Unique God (1). Thus, although prayer is of great importance, it is particularly important to hold it communally, because prayer is on the one hand the symbol of obedience to the alone leader and on the other hand it shows empathy, discipline and cohesion of a group and Muslims unity in order to pray the God Almighty (2). The studies conducted today have a significant and increasing emphasis on the positive relationship between prayer and mental health and peace (3). Today, many psychologists have also realized that pray, prayer and a strong faith in religion will remove anxiety, depression, disquiet, stress and fear which lead to many diseases: "Ala be zekre allah Tatmayen Al-gholub." Mental health and peace are a result of a full disregard and ignorance of life problems during the prayer. The results obtained from an effective and successful psychotherapy will be the same as the one achieved from prayer (4). On the other hand, perhaps anxiety is the most common aspect in human's everyday life and today it is common enough to be considered an integral part and the main feature of humans so that all human beings would be exposed to stress in their everyday life and all aspects and areas of their life and they would not be able to live without anxiety (5). The exams during the education are among the most threatening events that today cause anxiety in students. Exam anxiety is a particular type of anxiety characterized with physical and cognitive symptoms when preparing for the exam and during the tests and exams. Exam anxiety becomes a problem when it gets so high that it causes impaired concentration and interferes with the test (6). Therefore, the study was conducted to examine the prayer impact on exam anxiety in the students who participated in the communal prayer compared to those who did not in Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences.

### **Methodology**

This descriptive-analytic study was conducted to examine the prayer impact on exam anxiety in the students who participated in the communal prayer compared to those who did not. Convenience sampling method was used in this study. The research population included the students of Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences who were studying during the research and were willing to participate in the study.

The students were divided into two groups A and B. Group A included the students who participated in the communal prayer and Group B included the students who did not participate in the communal prayer. A checklist and Sarason Anxiety Inventory were used to collect data. After data collection, data were analyzed using SPSS Software. In addition, analytical statistics methods including paired T-test and independent T-test were used to compare quantitative data and Chi-square test was used to assess qualitative data. Moreover, all research data remained confidential by the researcher.

### **Finding**

Sixty four students of 17 to 28 years old participated in this study thirty one of whom were male students and 33 were female students presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of students in each group

Variable	Number	Percentage
Male Group A	16	25
Group B	15	23.43
Female Group A	20	31.25
Group B	13	20.31

In this study, the mean exam anxiety score in students of Group A (in both genders) was less than B.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

According to the study results, the mean exam anxiety score in Group A in both genders was less than group B.

Ms. Zahra Abbasi et al. in their study showed that the prevalence of anxiety in people with religious views who say prayer is below normal and there is a significant difference between the groups that say prayer on time and the other groups in terms of trait anxiety (7). The above mentioned study is consistent with the present study in suggesting that prayer can also reduce the other psychiatric disorders. For example, Mrs. Marzieh Mogharab et al. conducted a descriptive-analytic study on the relationship between prayer and depression among the students of Birjand University of Medical Sciences in 2008. In this study, 400 students studying in Birjand University of Medical Sciences were selected through quota random sampling method. The study results showed that 87% of the students were highly concerned about prayer, 73% held prayer due to their parents' emphasis and 85% considered the environment effective in holding prayer and religious duties and discretions. In 91%, their family members held prayers, 48% held on time prayers and 53% preferred to pray in congregation. Eighty four percent (84%) of students were bound to perform religious duties and 47% performed recommendations before and after the prayer 79% of which started praying at the age of puberty. Eighty three (83%) believed that they achieve mental tranquility after praying and 62% did worships and screeds with God after prayers. Only 31% of students believed in health benefits and secrets of ablution. In terms of Beck Depression Inventory, 55% of students had no sign of depression, 21% had mild depression, 16% had moderate depression and 8% had severe depression. There was an inverse correlation equal to 0.49 between the mean depression score and mean score of questions on prayer and religious beliefs in the reviewed students (8). The results of the study conducted by Mr. Moadeli and Ghazanfari Hussam Abadi on the anxiety level in nursing and midwifery students in 2004 in Shiraz showed that 90.9% of nursing and midwifery students had experienced low level of exam anxiety and the average rate of exam anxiety in nursing students was at severe level (9). Mr. Gholmirzaei et al. in a descriptive study conducted on 154 students of medical basic sciences to examine the prevalence of exam anxiety among students of medical basic sciences and its relationship with their GPA during the 2013-2014 in Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences showed that the students' mean exam anxiety score was  $21.53 \pm 10.3$ . Exam anxiety was mild in 12 cases (7.79%), moderate in 46 cases (29.78%) and severe in 96 cases (62.33%) (10). Finally, it was suggested that further studies be conducted in this regard to determine the other aspects of the prayer impact on anxiety and reducing it.

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