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Effect of Quran recitation on the level of anxiety in athletics

Mottaghi M. E.[*] ***MSc***, **Esmaili R.**[1] ***MSc***, **Rohani Z.**[1] ***BSc***

[*]*Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, Gonabad, Iran;*
[1]*Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, Gonabad, Iran*

Abstract

Aims: Anxiety is a kind of agitation and apprehension which is caused under the influence of the threat or danger feeling in individuals. Anxiety in athletes can reduce the optimum performance. According to the Islamic religious doctrines, spiritual relationship with God comforts the hearts and prevent from the anxiety. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of hearing the Holy Quran lilt on the athlete's competitive anxiety.

Methods: This research was a quasi-experimental (randomized cohort) study. Samples of the study were 80 female students studied in Gonabad University of Medical Sciences who were attending the sporting events. Data collection tools were of personal information and Marten's competitive anxiety questionnaires. First, the anxiety of all subjects in the control and experimental group was determined before the tournaments. Then, on the race day, about an hour before holding, for 15 min the Quran's lilt was broadcast for experimental group that had been gathered in a hall, and finally 15 minutes before the competition outset, the anxiety questionnaire was distributed among subjects and collected after completion.

Results: The mean anxiety score of the experimental and control groups before the intervention were 20.3±2.68 and 20.7±1.6 respectively and after the intervention were 17.5±1.02 and 20.2±1.87, respectively. Significant difference was not observed between the mean score of the experimental and control groups before the intervention but after intervention, there was a significant difference (p=0.02).

Conclusion: Reading [of] and listening to the Quran verses is a simple, effective, affordable, accessible and most importantly drug free method to reduce anxiety in athletes before competition.

Keywords: Anxiety, Quran, Athlete

Introduction

Sports psychology is a subset of psychology, related branches of physical education and sports with a history of less than three decades.

Among the main presented axes in sport psychology that affects the performance in athletes; especially in championship is the anxiety before competition and its effect on mood and movement skills. The effect of anxiety states before competition on psychological and sport skills conditions of athletes is the main factor in investigating athletes' function. An athlete may have all needed factors and physical facilities for success and may have passed essential technical and tactical education with optimal physical condition but cannot conquer the competitive pressure. In other words, keeping the control of anxiety and making mental relaxation give extreme strength and power to the athletes and make them ready in confrontation with opponents [1].

Anxiety is one of unpleasant emotional states that a small amount of it would affect reaching success and its exceeding amount will be harmful [2]. Anxiety is said to be the feeling of distress, discomfort, excitement, stress or fear, in psychology [3].

Anxiety is associated with the negative form of cognitive evaluation such as self-doubt, fear and worry. According to Lazarus and Kohan, anxiety arises when demands are more than available sources or when there are demands and no ready resources are available or there is no automatic adaptive response.

Many western contemporary scholars emphasize that the problem of modern human basically returns to his need for religion and spiritual values. Toynbee, one of famous historians, believes the crisis that Europeans have faced with, goes back to their spiritual poverty and the only way to cure this moral devastation of west is returning to religion. In this era of anxiety and materialism that there is intensive competition for achieving materialistic goals, there is more need for moral supplements. Strong faith in God gives a sort of spiritual power to human that helps him in tolerating hardships and removes many of agitation and anxiety that many people are affected by. Faith would increase the confidence and ability of humans in tolerating and facing with life problems and creates the sense of tranquility and security for him [4].

Music can be a stimulus for creating physiological and psychological response in audience [5]. The results of Sabo and Michael's study in 1996 about the effect of music on anxiety and side effects of chemotherapy show that the music can reduce the anxiety of patients

* Correspondence; Email: mottaghym@yahoo.com
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who undergo chemotherapy [6]. Since the pleasant rhythm of Quran and its pleasant song is nice as a spiritual music and basically the most glorious miracle of Quran is its harmony with pleasant songs and harmonious vocal music, it influences the whole world when accompanied by a warm, beautiful voice and attractive phonetic songs [7]. One of the most beautiful, attractive and the most natural types of music is the spiritual music of Quran recitation that is emphasized to be recited with a beautiful voice and with the best quality. Good voice is considered as the decoration of Quran in Iran [8].

Skimming the Quran shows that it is full of verses emphasizing on relaxation and the way of achieving tranquility and is full of stories about people placed in stressful situations the with specific strategies that they have overcome stress. This issue led to WHO's (world health organization) advice to the Islamic countries in the Regional Mental Health Summit held in 1998 in Eastern Mediterranean region to prepare a booklet containing Quran verses that are related to mental health [9]. Despite the great amount of research on the relationship between religious attitudes and psychological variables (including anxiety and stress), investigation of conducted studies and sources show that unfortunately very little scientific research is available about the psychological effects of Quran. Thus, this study was conducted with the purpose of investigating the effect of Quran on the level of athletes' anxiety before sport completions.

Methods

This is a quasi-experimental study. The study population was 100 female athlete university students from Gonabad Medical University who took part in sports competitions. Study samples were chosen among the people who were interested in participation and also had the specifications determined by the researcher. Students participated in competitions in different individual and group fields. 40 selected people were randomly placed in control group and 40 people were placed in experimental group (20 people were excluded due to different reasons).

The methods of data collection included the demographic information questionnaire and Martens' questionnaire of sport competition anxiety. In the instruction of this questionnaire, besides essential guidance about the way of answering, it was mentioned that the participants should avoid inserting their name and family.

The first phase of the research was conducted at the time of teams` preparation camping and both groups completed the anxiety and demographic questionnaire. The second stage was held at the time of tournament as follows: the experimental group gathered in a hall an hour before starting the competition and listened to Quran verses broadcasted by tape-recorder for 15 minutes (reciters and verses were chosen randomly). The questionnaires were distributed among the individuals 15 minutes before the competition and were collected after completion.

After data collection in two pre- and post-test steps, the collected data was analyzed with SPSS 15 statistical software, independent and paired T-test and Chi-square test.

Results

The average age of the samples was 21.35±2.23. There was no significant difference in experimental and control groups in terms of demographic characteristics (Marital status, economic status and Residence location) ($p>0.05$).

Table 1- Demographic profile of studied samples

Frequency→ Index↓		Absolute	Relative
Marital status	Married	20	15.2
	Single	60	84.4
Residence	Native	13	10.4
	Non-Native	67	89.7
Economic status	Good	23	18.4
	Medium	55	80
	Low	2	1.6

The average of anxiety score of control and experimental groups before intervention was 20.3±2.68 and 20.7±1.6 and was 17.53±1.02 and 20.2±1.87 after intervention, respectively.

Independent t-test (comparison of two groups) did not show significant difference between the average of scores in control and experimental groups before the intervention ($p>0.05$), but there was significant difference ($p=0.02$) after intervention. In addition, there was significant difference in the average score of experimental group before and after the intervention ($p=0.001$). However, the average of anxiety score in control group was not statistically significant before and after the intervention ($p>0.05$). There was no significant difference between mean scores before and after intervention.

Discussion & Conclusion

All people experience anxiety. Anxiety is an unpleasant and ambiguous feeling which is specified by a set of vague and unpleasant symptoms such as

palpitation, sweating, Dyspnea (shortness of breath), etc. [10]. There are several medical and non-medical methods to reduce people's anxiety. One of the most important non-medical procedures is invasive diagnostic music-therapy procedures [11] and one of the most beautiful and the most harmonious music types is the Holy Quran recitation that can be used to reduce anxiety. The anxiety score of athletes who were affected by Quran recitation was significantly less than non-affected athletes, which shows that listening to people reciting the Quran has significantly reduced the individuals' anxiety.

Studies on the effects of religious activities and increasing of mental health show that the findings of this study are consistent with many other studies. Moghaddam Nia and Maghsoudi indicate that Fasting in Ramadan reduces the students' anxiety significantly [12]. In addition, the finding of Sharifi et al [13], Kazemian Moghadam and Mehrabizade Honarmand [14], Soleimanizade and,Aghamollai [15] Salehi et al. can be mentioned that all show religious attitude has negative relationship with general health disorders. This means that religious attitude reduces the disorders related to general health. In addition, Taghilou In his study shows that teaching Quran recitation has significant effect on reducing the stress of adolescents and young people [17]. According to the study of Kazemi et al. hearing the Holy Quran recitation can be an effective way of improving students' mental health [18]. Majidi in his research about the effects of Quran recitation on anxiety of patients before angiography concludes that the Quran recitation can act as a non-medical, reliable and cheap method to reduce anxiety in patients before surgeries and invasive diagnostic methods [19].

Researchers believe that when the religious attitude is stronger, the rate of anxiety and depression resulting from waiting for death will be diminished. Therefore, the results of this research that shows the recitation of Quran considerably reduces the amount of anxiety in athletes, are not unusual because of our belief in Quran and observing its recommendations and instructions since we believe that the Quran is a clear way to achieve inner perfection and peace.

Quran has constructive solutions and recommendations such as praying (Verse 45 and 153 Sura Baqara), repentance and recitation (verses 7 to 28 of Sura Raad), trusting God (verse 4 of Sure Nahl), praising God (verses70 and 71Forghan Sure), participating in religious ceremonies and generally practical liability to provisions and religious commands to deal with psychological pressures that Muslims confront with.

Reciting the Quran and listening to it reduces the athletes' anxiety, which indicates that the voice of Quran is the simplest, safest and most common way to deal with psychological, mental and even physical problems.

Therefore, authorities should consider this point in planning and also physicians and psychologists could recommend Quran recitation and listening to it besides medical advices. Sports coaches and those involved in sport can also start their program with the recitation of the Quran verses before starting the sessions of exercise and sport activities.

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