The influence of religiosity and spirituality on quality of life of elderly

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Malaysia is undergoing a demographic shift towards an aging population, with individuals aged 60 and above projected to exceed 17% by 2040. Maintaining and improving quality of life is crucial as aging related with increased physical disease and mental disorders which can negatively impact quality of life. Quality of life (QoL) can be impacted via several factors including physical, mental, and social. However, this paper will only focus on social factors specifically religiosity and spirituality (R/S). As Islam is the main religion in Malaysia, this paper will primarily focus on Islamic components in the discussion of religiosity and spirituality. This study aims to review existing research in Malaysia on how religiosity and spirituality influence the QoL among the elderly, identify the key components of R/S examined, and assess their effects on various QoL domains. **Materials and Methods:** This systematic review was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using various databases, including PubMed, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, and MyCite, to identify relevant studies. The search was performed using keywords such as "religiosity", "spirituality", "elderly", "quality of life" and "Malaysia". Extracted data were categorized into quantitative and qualitative findings, and a descriptive analysis was performed to summarize the results. Ethical approval was not required as this review was based on previously published studies. **Results:** A total of 53 studies were screened initially, however only 14 studies met the inclusion criteria. 11 studies reported positive association between religiosity and spirituality with QoL of elderly. Different studies used different religiosity and spirituality components and different QoL domains. Components were accessed in these studies included belief in a higher power, religious activity, intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, personal and social religiosity, and spiritual elements. QoL domains often focused on psychological well-being, physical well-being, social well-being, life satisfaction, and healthy aging. Despite the variations, the findings largely indicated positive associations between religiosity and QoL. **Conclusion:** Most studies suggested that religiosity and spirituality were positively associated with QoL of the elderly. Elderly with excellent religiosity and spirituality domains have better QoL. Therefore, incorporating religiosity and spirituality elements in elderly is important to improve their overall well-being and life quality towards the end of their age. Further research is needed to explore on specific religiosity and spirituality measurement and religion variations. As this review diverts more towards Islam, future research should also explore on other religion as Malaysia is a multicultural country with various religion.

Keywords: Religiosity, spirituality, quality of life, elderly, Malaysia