



## The effect of a community-based spiritual life review program on Indonesian elders' resilience

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### KEYWORDS

Community;  
Spiritual life review;  
Elderly;  
Resilience;  
Disaster

### Abstract

**Objective:** This quasi-experimental, pre-/post-test study aimed to examine the effect of a community-based spiritual life review program on the resilience of elders residing in a disaster-prone area.

**Method:** Fifty-two participants who met the inclusion criteria were recruited from three villages in the Kutaraja sub-district in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group. The participants' names were listed and then randomly selected by a random number generator. The experimental group underwent a community-based spiritual life review program, which included a review of their spiritual lives, the appreciation of feelings, affirmation by the religious leader, a reevaluation of their lives, and a reconstruction of their lives to recognize their memories and present feelings.

**Results:** The elderly resilience scores were evaluated four weeks after the program was implemented. The control group received the same program after the study was finished. The participants in the experimental group significantly improved their resilience levels after completing the program ( $p < .05$ ). There was a slight increase in the resilience scores from the pre-test to the post-test in the experimental group compared with the control group ( $p < .05$ ).

**Conclusions:** Future studies should add implementation sessions and avoid photos that would induce participants' traumatic memories or experiences during the spiritual life review.

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### Introduction

Disasters are categorized as the most significant catastrophe in the world<sup>1</sup>. Disasters often occur suddenly, caused by natural phenomena such as tsunamis, earthquakes, storms, flooding, and volcanic eruptions. Disasters are occurring at an unprecedented rate worldwide<sup>2</sup> Indonesia is a country with a high risk of disaster. It is located in the Pacific "Ring of Fire", which experiences frequent earthquakes and vol-

canic eruptions. The Ring of Fire is associated with a series of oceanic trenches and volcanic mountain ranges or plate movements<sup>3</sup>.

Elderly people are more vulnerable to the psychosocial effects of a disaster<sup>4</sup>. Istiany reported that hundreds of elders suffered from mental disorders after the earthquake and tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia<sup>5</sup>. Many aspects of elder's life are vulnerable including the biological, psychological, economic, and social aspects<sup>6</sup>. The biological factor is the de-

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generation of cells during the aging process<sup>7</sup>. From psychological factors include frustration, loneliness, and depression<sup>6</sup>. Then the economic changes include the lack of financial support after a disaster<sup>8</sup>. Finally, social aspect related to the sociological change of elders. The elderly who lose their family members and live alone need specific care from others during a disaster. The elders who are living alone appear to have a worse health status and health risk behaviors than those living with others<sup>9</sup>.

Maneerat<sup>10</sup> identified five major components of elderly resilience: positive physical function, positive emotional function, effective coping strategies, spiritual support, and social support. She revealed that social support and spiritual support have impact on the elders' resilience. Olphen et al.<sup>11</sup> conducted a household survey with 679 elderly respondents in the United States. They found that social support and spiritual support through religious involvement had a positive influence on health in general. Thus, the resilient elderly tend to have better health. A study by the Australian Association of Gerontology<sup>12</sup> indicated that the elderly with lower resilience have less vitality, limited role performance, and worse self-perceived health than those with higher resilience.

Elders who face adversity should have high resilience to maintain their health<sup>12</sup>. Health care provider need to develop a program combining spiritual support and social support to enhance elders' resilience. Several researchers have indicated that a life review program enables elders to enhance their spiritual well-being<sup>13-15</sup> and is beneficial and cost effective<sup>16</sup>. The life review allows participants to review, appreciate, reevaluate, and recognize their own lives. Ando et al.<sup>14</sup> created some questions to review the participants' past experience and used pictures as a medium to express their stories. Through the past life story telling about the impressive memory, significant contribution in life and important role in life enable participants gain social support. Appreciating and religious affirmation on one's past life may also contribute to spiritual support among participants.

Nurses in the community can help older adults develop new programs to meet their psychosocial and developmental needs through the spiritual life review program<sup>17</sup>. By doing so, the older persons can review and evaluate their life experiences by exploring the meaning of memorable events in their lives and obtaining social support from their peer group in the neighborhood.

The spiritual life review program is appropriate for Indonesian elders. The cultural and social activities in the community involve religious belief. The people attend religious affirmations by religious leaders, pray together in the mosque, and conduct community meetings in the mosque. However, limited collaboration exists between nurses and the community resources such as religious leaders in terms of health promotion activities. The community-based spiritual life review program aims to promote resilience among elders who live in disaster-prone areas. The community is expected to show high acceptance of this developing program if it is introduced from collaboration nurses and religious leaders.

In this study, the researchers added to the existing studies<sup>13,15,18</sup> by examining the effectiveness of a community-based spiritual life review program in promoting the resilience of Indonesian elders living in a disaster-prone

area. The results will be used for further community-based programs to promote resilience among the elderly population.

## Method

This quasi-experimental study used a two-group pre-test and post-test design to examine the effect of a community-based spiritual life review program on promoting resilience among Indonesian elders residing in a disaster-prone area of Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The experimental group underwent the community-based spiritual life review program. The control group received similar program after the study had finished.

The target setting of this study was the Kutaraja sub-district of Banda Aceh. This sub-district was purposively selected because it was seriously affected by the 2004 tsunami. Earthquakes still occur throughout the year in this region. The Kutaraja sub-district contains six villages: Keudah, Peulangahan, Merduati, Lampaseh Kota, Gampong Pande, and Gampong Jawa. All of these villages are categorized as sub-urban because they are located near the city of Banda Aceh.

The sample was determined using power analysis based on the effect size of a previous study (Ando et al., 2008) regarding the life review program, which included reevaluating and appreciating previous life experience as well as group's album. The group's album is consists of the photos that the participants chose in term to express their feeling in the program. The program was conducted in two sessions within a four-week intervention. According to Cohen<sup>19</sup>, the necessary sample size for a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$ , power = .80, and effect size (d) = 1.00 was a minimum of 17 subjects per group. However, in the present study, the sample size was increased by 50% to 26 subjects per group or a total of 52 subjects. The researchers increased the sample size because of the different setting and refer to one study from the pilot study. A pilot study was conducted to evaluate the feasibility of the protocol<sup>20</sup>. The protocol consists of guidelines of the program which is develop and modified by researchers. In the pilot study, 12 elders met the inclusion criteria and joined the community-based spiritual life review program. Generally, the program was applicable to the present study.

The present study used the Elder Resilience Scale Questionnaire (ERSQ), which consists of 24 items originally developed by Maneerat<sup>10</sup>. The questionnaire has five dimensions: being able to join with people (6 items), being confident in life (5 items), having social support (4 items), living with spiritual security (4 items), and being able to de-stress and manage problems (5 items). Each item was measured using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = disagree, 2 = partially agree, 3 = quite agree, 4 = completely agree). Higher total and subscale scores indicate higher spiritual resilience. Statistically, this tool has been proven a reliable and valid measure of resilience<sup>10</sup>.

Content validity was applied to test the instrument validity. The intervention program/protocol and ERSQ were validated by three experts: one expert in psychiatric nursing from the Faculty of Nursing at the Prince of Songkla University, one expert in community nursing from the Faculty of

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