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The Effectiveness of Prayer in Maintenance of Physical Health in Context of "Stand, Pray, There is Shifa/Healing in Prayers" (*Hadees. Ibne Maja)*

Mahboob Ur Rahman*

Physiotherapy Department, Hayatabad Medical Complex, Pakistan

***Corresponding author:** Dr. Mahboob Ur Rahman, Habib Physiotherapy Complex, Habib Physiotherapy Complex, Phase 5, Hayatabad, Peshawar, Pakistan, Email: mahboobhpc@gmail.com

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Abstract

The major function of rehabilitation and physical medicine specialists is to provide the proper therapy that helps in improving the physical activities of impaired, disabled and handicapped persons through improvement in their muscle strength. In performing their function, the rehabilitation team should always take heed of the social and mental well-being of such patients. Having observed millions of Muslims perform the salat (prayer) regularly at specified times throughout the world, we postulated that salat, along with its various postures, can play a role in increasing psychological well-being including self-reliance and self-esteem, improving musculo-skeletal fitness, motor behaviour and cerebral blood flow that may be beneficial for physical health. The physical activities involved in the performance of salat helps in physical health by improving blood flow and increasing musculoskeletal fitness. The salat prayer involves little effort (standing, bowing, prostration and sitting), has a short duration and is beneficial for physical health. Moreover salat prayer has psychological, musculoskeletal and cerebral effects on improving the muscular functions in physical health. The physiotherapist of the rehabilitation centre who assists the patient to restore and preserve joint range of motion through mobilization techniques and exercise may take this prayer system as a model for restoring the residual strength of the patient. Salat has special characteristics in that it is a short duration mild-to-moderate psychological, physical and brain activity. Scientific evidence also supports the notion that even moderate intensity activities, when performed daily, can have some long-term health benefits. Salat is like a free hand exercise. This activity is convenient for all kinds of patients, including children, the elderly and physically handicapped, for strengthening their muscles as well as the mind. More studies are needed in future to determine the full beneficial effects of the salat prayer on the rehabilitative process of disabled persons.

Keywords: Salat Prayers; Salah

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Introduction

The word Salah originates from the Arabic word 'Silah' which means connection i.e. connection with The God. The Islamic definition of Salah is the name given to the formal prayer of Islam. Salah is the second pillar and a fundamental principle of religion Islam and is an important practice which must be performed at fix times and conditions, following a sequence. The pattern of the salat prayer performed by Muslims is similar all over the world. Salah has many postures like Standing (Qiyam), Bowing (Rukoo), Prostration (Sujood) and Sitting during the salutation (Tahayat), all have a strong relationship with spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing. Several reports on the application of prayers in psychotherapy illustrate the positive outcome in the individuals exhibiting psychological symptoms such as tension, anxiety, depression and anti-social tendencies [1]. Study has proven that non-Muslim participants just going through the physical movements of Salah also showed appreciable results from the exercise [2].

The five mandatory salat are spread over various parts of the day in such a way that the devotee is not only in contact with the Creator frequently and receives peace and blessings as his reward but also experiences physical well-being that has now been scientifically confirmed [3-5]. During salat, Muslims usually keep their eyes fixed on the site of prostration. This visual fixation together with Proprioceptive systems, vestibular systems, and the various postures provide a complex positional sense in the brain stem and cerebellum [6,7]. Before salat it is compulsory for Muslim to be in ablution. Ablution involves washing of hands, mouth, nose face and feet which is hygienic activity to avoid diseases related to the particular parts of the body (washed) and it also provide positive stimulus for motor and sensory function of those segments [8-10].

Salah gives exercise to the heart and make one healthy. Regular Salah also has a great impact on resting heart rate. Salah activity makes artery vessels more flexible due to rise and fall of blood circulation result decreases heart diseases [11]. Based upon the literature, Prayer (Namaz) as physical activity, May improves and maintains health thus preventing physical disabilities as joints disorders, wasting of muscles and improvement of general health. The objective of this study is to determine the efficacy of the prayers in physical ailments.

Methodology

This is a questionnaire based descriptive study conducted at the Community by using convenience sampling of 217 healthy male/Female through Habib Physiotherapy Complex, Hayatabad Peshawar - Pakistan in May, 2015. Muslims either male or female age ranging 30 to 75 years was included in the study. The inclusion criteria for the Islamic prayer group were those who regularly performed Islamic prayer as scheduled (5 times per day) during the last 30 years and those who did not regularly practice any particular established religious customs were included in the non-practicing or rare group. Potential subjects were excluded from the study based on the following considerations: obesity, neurological disorders including peripheral neuropathy and major musculoskeletal conditions, such as complicated back, hip and knee pain. Subjects taking medications such as sedatives, hypnotics, anxiolytics, and antidepressants were also excluded. All the protocols were approved by the research ethical committee of Gandhara University Peshawar, Pakistan. Data was analysed through SPSS version 20.

Results

In this study there were total 217 participants in which 169 were male and 46 female. The ratio of male to female was 4:1. Namaz offer of regular, irregular, rare or no offer were focused and correlated with physical health and disability of the subject. Out of 169 there were 66 candidates who offer namaz regularly bajamat, among them 58 were found to have no disability while 8 participants were found with joint problem.64 participant showed their normal physical health and two walk with support (Table 1&2).

Gender	Namaz offer	Normal	Disability	Physical Health Normal	P.H. with support
127	Regular	104	23	116	7
59	Irregular	28	31	51	8
29	Rare or no	22	7	24	5

Table 1: Overall effect of prayers on Physical health.

Regular	Frequency	Total	Percentage
Normal Joint Phy Heath With support	104 23 116 7	127 127 127 127	81.9 18.1 91.3 5.5
Irregular			
Normal Joint Phy Heath With support	28 31 51 8	59 59 59 59	47.4 52.5 86.4 13.5
Rare or no			
Normal Joint Phy Heath With support	22 7 24 5	29 29 29 29	75.9 24.1 82.7 17.2

Table 2: Percent Effect of prayers on physical health.

Discussion

During the performance of salat, most of the muscles and joints of the body are involved. This activity is convenient for all kinds of patients, including children, the elderly and physically handicapped, for strengthening their muscles as well as the mind. Our study clearly showed that those people who offered regular namaz they were 91.3 % healthy as compare to those who were offering irregular 86.4 % and rare or no 86.2 % respectively. The finding of the study is very positive about the salat in context of physical health which is consistent with the studies done by [12–15].

Conclusion

It can be seen from the above discussion that salat prayer has psychological, musculoskeletal and cerebral effects on improving the muscular functions of disabled patient in a rehabilitation program. The physiotherapist of the rehabilitation centre who assists the patient to restore and preserve joint range of motion through mobilization techniques and exercise may take this prayer system as a model for restoring the residual strength of the patient.

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