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Traffic Accident Victim with Spinal Cord Injury in Indonesia: Islamic Value for Children with Traffic Trauma

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Abstract

The rate of accidents in Indonesia is increasing from year to year. Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) reported , in 2012, there were 117.949 number of traffic accident killed person with 29.544 accidents , 39.704 accidents with serious injuries and 128.312 slightly accidents. Accident victims are not only adults, but also children and not a few of those who became disabled due to an accident. Physical paralyzed in bottom down of their body develops anxiety, instable emotion, denial, feeling sad and hopeless. Islam teaches us about dealing with sickness and depression. It shows in Qur'an "Mankind there has come to you a guidance from your Lord and a healing for (the diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe a guidance and a mercy". This article discusses the case of an 11 years old boy who became paralyzed in an accident and how the struggle of a mother to her son with uplifting Islamic values. In depth interviewed and observations made during the first week after the accident and after discharged from Surakarta Orthopedic Hospital (Prof. Dr. Soeharso Hospital). Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-IV (CAPS) translated in Indonesia and it was used as interview protocol. The results suggest that Islamic values such as accepting and patient of Allah test and trial on child of accident victim with permanent disabilities needs to be done to optimize for recovery and rehabilitation.

Keywords:*trauma, spirituality, Islam, traffic and transportation psychology*

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, road traffic injuries is estimated 1.24 million deaths worldwide in the year 2010, slightly down from 1.26 million in 2000. That is one person killed every 25 seconds. Only 28 countries, representing 449 million people (7% of the world's population), have adequate laws that address all five risk factors (speed, drink–driving, helmets, seat-belts and child restraints). Over a third of road traffic deaths in low- and middle-income countries are among pedestrians and cyclists. However, less than 35% of low- and middle-income countries have policies in place to protect these road users (World Health Organisation/ WHO, 2013).

Several studies have shown that traffic accidents are a common cause of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Ursano et al (1999) found a prevalence of 25%

PTSD three months and 18% six months after the traffic accident. PTSD seems to be an important psychological consequence of accidents with motorized vehicles. Most studies involve populations of patienselected according to the kind of injury caused by the accident, e.g. an orthopedic trauma (Starr et al, 2004), a spinal cord trauma (Nielsen, 2003) or a brain trauma (Harvey, 2000).

Surviving from an accident or become witnesses of the accident was a terrible experience for everyone. Bad memories the accident, the feeling that cannot receive physical disability after the accident, and avoiding feeling to go back again to drive are overshadowing the victims after discharged from the hospital.

Family is an important socio-cultural component as it is the unit of the society, which has a huge impact on personality development and a potential factor in different psychiatric disorders. Bowlby revealed that the permanent loss of a parent during childhood might increase the vulnerability to certain forms of psychopathology (Bowbly, 1952).

Islam enforces the family role in Muslim's life and emphasizes the religious, moral, and ethical values, on the contrary to Western society, which started nowadays to suffer from moral decay leading to broken families with increased divorce rate and number of unwed mothers and single parent families. Drug abuse and excessive sexual activities are predominant in adolescents and young adults. These events lead to conflict, loneliness, guilt, loss of self-esteem, which results in manifestation of a variety of pathological disorders (Al Haj, 1987).

On the other hand, as the family unit is sacred among Muslim people and it is very common to find different families with over involvement and enmeshment patterns, who considered a continuous source of support to the individual (Meleis and La Fever, 1984).

The aim of this study was to analyze the influence of Islamic values from mother to child, who traumatized after a traffic accident.

Islamic Value

Religion is a cultural system of behaviors and practices, world views, sacred texts, holy places, ethics, and societal organization that relate humanity to what an anthropologist has called "an order of existence" (Geertz, 1993). Islam is amonotheistic religion based on revelations to the Prophet Muhammad 1400 years ago, which were recorded in the sacred Quran (Koran). The word Islam in Arabic means “submission,” reflecting the central core of Islam, which is the submission to the will of God (Sabry and Vohra, 2013). Therefore, it can be concluded that the importance of a sense of surrender to God for all the things that happened.

Islam provides Muslims with a code of behavior, ethics, and social values, which helps them in tolerating and developing adaptive coping strategies to deal with stressful life events. Islam teaches how to live in harmony with others “Seek the life to come by means of what God granted

you, but do not neglect your rightful share in this world. Do good to others as God has done good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for God does not love those who do this" (Quran, 28:77) (Sabry and Vohra, 2013).

Motherhood in Islam

Mothers are not homogenous in their parenting practices and we believe that in order to understand the diversity in parenting we first need to address the context of mothers's values. Values are the "standards of right and wrong" or "the general goals of an individual" (Padilla-Walker, 2007 in Al-Jayyousi et.al, 2014). Muslim mothers' values regarding parenting are influenced by religion (Maiter& George, 2003 in Al-Jayyousi et.al, 2014). Religion, for some individuals, is part of the identity which gives an explanation for what is happening in one's life and for his/ her behaviors (Hjarpe, 1997, in Al-Jayyousi et.al, 2014). We can define religion as beliefs "meanings and perspectives that are faith-based", and practices that are "the expressions of faith" (Marks, 2006, in Al-Joyyousi et.al, 2014).The Muslim mother's values and practice should be return what has written in Al Qur'an and Hadith.

Psychological Trauma

Psychological trauma occurs when a sudden, unexpected, overwhelming intense emotional blow or a series of blows assaults the person from outside. Traumatic events are external, but they quickly became incorporated into the mind (Terr, 1990 in Bloom, 1999). Besides that, trauma creates a vital discrepancy between threatening situational factors and individual coping strategies, which accompanied by feelings of helplessness and unprotected exposure and as a long-term disturbance of self and the world (Fischer & Riedesser, 1999).

Psychological Trauma of Road Accident Victim in Children

Many psychological reactions and disorders after traffic accidents are passengers, limited in themselves and show a beneficial regression forecast. However, a significant minority of victims developed the full-blown PTSD. Accidents are the most common civilian trauma in Western countries. Through their unpredictability, suddenness, uncontrollability and danger to life, health and integrity they have a high potential of trauma. In a subset it comes to the chronicity of the initial shock, stress, and stress reactions. Unfavorable healing processes, massive suffering for the victims and their family environment as well as high costs of health and social security systems are the consequences (Nice, 2005 in Maercker, 2013).

The effects of psychological trauma can affect children's psychological development. Development of the capacity to regulate affect might be undermined or disrupted by trauma, and children exposed to acute or chronic trauma may show symptoms of mood swings, impulsivity, emotional irritability, anger and aggression, anxiety, depression and dissociation. Early trauma, particularly trauma at the hands of a caregiver, can

markedly alter a child's perception of self, trust in others and perception of the world. Children who experience severe early trauma often develop a foreshortened sense of the future. They come to expect that life will be dangerous, that they may not survive, and as a result, they give up hope and expectations for themselves that reach into the future (Terr, 1992 in Moroz, 2005).

Children who lack a secure attachment relationship are at greater risk for extreme dysregulation of affect in the face of trauma and the development of enduring posttraumatic stress symptoms. Conversely, the presence of a secure attachment relationship can buffer the adverse effects of trauma and provide the safety and nurturing that allows the child to process the traumatic events and return to a sense of safety and wellbeing. Secure attachment bonds serve asprimary defenses against trauma induced psychopathology in both children and adults (Finkelhor&Browne, 1984 in Moroz, 2005). In children who have been exposed to severe stressors, the quality of the parental bond is probably the single most important determinant of long term damage (McFarlane, 1988, in Moroz, 2005).It is very clear how importance of the role of the mother as a child care giver to assist in the healing process of trauma.

Method

Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-IV

The CAPS is a structured interview designed to make a categorical PTSD diagnosis, as well as to provide a measure of PTSD symptom severity. The structure corresponds to the DSM-IV criteria, with B, C, and D symptoms rated for both frequency and intensity; these two scores are summed to provide severity ratings. Additional questions assess Criteria A, E, and F. The CAPS-IV also inquires about associated features of guilt and dissociation; the latter allow the interview to be used for assessment of Acute Stress Disorder (e.g., Creamer et al., 2004; O'Donnell et al., 2004). Schnyder & Moregeli (2002) reported that the German version of the CAPS is reliable instrument for the assessment of posttraumatic stress disorder symptomatology in accident victims.

Interview Protocol

There are several aspects to be explored in the Islamic trauma healing process of the respondents, namely:

1. Cognitive/belief aspect
2. The cultural aspect
3. Family support
4. The effectiveness of medical rehabilitation for mental health and recovery

Sample

Mother and son (11 years old) from Temanggung, Central Java. The son was patient in Prof. Dr. Soeharso Orthopedic Hospital in Surakarta. He has spinal cord injury and become paralyzed. The interviews were intensively done in first month after accident and while he was inpatient treatment in orthopedic hospital.

Findings

Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-IV

The results of CAPS is categorize as middle PTSD symptom with the score between 40 and 59 (Schnyder & Moergeli, 2002).

Interview

Unstructured depth interview regarding healing process of respondent has several aspects that have been explored.

1. Cognitive/belief aspect

   Mother explained how she convinced herself for what happened to his family before sheassured her son. Mother reported that this is the hardest thing to face.

   ``*I have always tried to convince myself that what happened today is from God, and God will provide a way out. Initially seemed to want to reject all this accident but finally I minded how my child can pass through this if, as his mother could not accept it. Until today, I just convinced, convinced God that now or later will come the help of Allah. Do not ask my children can walk again, but at least he could be a good boy*``

   Furthermore, the mother explained that her son changed from a cheerful and active child into a morose, but she never gave up giving encouragement to him.

   ``*He changes. He used to be very cheerful and active, but now he is very morose. He now does not want to play again because the accident occurred when he was playing with his friends. I do not know how many times I said to him that it was the will of God. We cannot turn back time and he did not play in the yard at the time. All had the will of Allah, as Allah permits. At first he was very angry, disappointed, and would not talk to me. My body feels like it is lame. But I do not want to give up, I repeatedly told him that all of this is fate, accept that and we can think about for the future. I'm not an educated mother, illiterate villagers. But I want my children to have a future, so I have to be strong, I must be sure; who else did I have to rely if not with God?*``

2. The cultural aspect

   Culture in Indonesia, Java community known as those who are patient and accept all the trials with sincerity. The mother also conveys this and she thinks that it makes more sincere after accident.

   ``*I was always taught by my parents that we must "nrimo (accept)" all the conditions given by God for certain that God gave trial certainly gave a way out as well. However, yes I am only human. I am also complaining. Yes, people like to say, "sing sabar. Sing nrimo (be patient, accept that) "and I have to be more patiently for my child recover. Now alhamdulillah thank God, at the beginning he*

did not want to eat until he was getting skinny, now he started to eat. His legs are shrunken because they cannot move and he was always angry when I touched his legs, now it is better. Indeed, I have to be more patient.``

During the interview, the neighbors came to give them gifts like fruits or food. Before they left the house, most of them said that she needed to be more patient and pray a lot for her son. If she needs something help, they said that they would come to give hands. It shows that social system is the part of culture aspect.

3. Family support

Son refused to go to school because of shame, but the mother did not give up bringing her son to school. Road conditions of the mountain did not discourage the mother to hold her son from home to school.

``*Despite having to crawl once, learning it is obligatory for Muslims. If he cannot walk, I will take him to school. At first it is hard for him, but with the time, with many times he meets with her peers, so he also gets support from teachers and friends. Besides that, his sister decided to no longer at boarding school and stay at home to help her brother and me. She is very helpful at all.*``

4. The effectiveness of medical rehabilitation for mental health and recovery

Rehabilitation programs offered by hospitals never be taken by mothers due to cost constraints. Costs incurred to rent an ambulance from her home to the hospital take quite high cost, so she chose to take care of her son at home.

``*After being discharged from hospital a month after the accident, he had to be hospitalized again because he could not pee. After the operation, we should regularly to the hospital for treatment, but the cost is expensive. I cannot afford it. What I can do is as what instructed by nurses at the hospital. Massage on his legs so that blood flow properly. Besides that, read the Koran. Back again, seek help with patience and prayer.*``

According to the mother, the rehabilitation programs offered by the hospital did not help much because no matter what his son cannot walk anymore. Now it takes just build more motivated for running live.

``*I know my son cannot walk anymore. I accept it. Nevertheless, the spirit is not allowing stop here. It must keep running. Therefore, I prepare mentally. So that when I am dead, he can still survive.*``

Discussion

From the findings, it can be seen that the mother always involve Allah SWT in every step she takes. After the accident that made her son Paralyzed, she has prepared herself to receive this trial before she start taking care of her son. At first, it is very difficult for mother to facing her son who is still in the shock reaction after the accident and try to accept his condition. In the interview, mother also reported that she could do was ask for help to Allah for everything that she did. This is also what been written in the Qur'an Al-Baqarah: 153 "O you who have Believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient ". It is what mother always tells her son not to leave prayer even under any circumstances. In addition, the mother also has always taught her son to read the Qur'an in order to be calm and not agitated to face trials. Tranquility is the most important thing to deal with difficult situations.

Caring culture can be seen clearly at home. Not only a mother who take care of him, but also his sister who decided not stay any longer in boarding school in order to take care of her brother. Family support is very strong here. In addition to the family, many neighbors also came to visit and give them support. At first, the child does not want to go to school because of embarrassment to his friends, but with the spirit of her mother who has willing to carry her son through difficult mountain road conditions, finally her spirit is contagious to her son. One verse of the Qur'an which is mother's motivation to carry her son to school is "O you who have Believed, when you are of toll," Space yourselves "in assemblies, then make-space; God will a make space for you. And when you are of toll, "Arise," then Arise; God will raise Reviews those who have Believed Among you and Reviews those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is acquainted with what you do"(Q.S Mujadilah: 11). The mother wants her son to have a good future and his degree raised through knowledge in front of Allah. In addition to frequently meet with peers and teachers, gradually his condition is getting better. He receives a lot of support so that his spirit grows by itself.

Islamic values taught by the mother to her son makes her son much better at dealing with his condition. The condition of shock reaction to stress comes also a natural reaction at the beginning after the accident. With the guidance of the mother, stress condition of her son begin to decrease and a more sincere in accepting the conditions so the son do not experience sustained psychological trauma.

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