

The effect of the holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety, stress, and depression: A scoping review on outcomes

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Abstract

Background and Aim: Anxiety, stress, and depressive disorders as common mental health problems have adverse effects in different populations. Holy Quran recitation and listening can help reduce these disorders. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the effect of the Holy Quran on anxiety, stress, and depression.

Materials and Methods: To retrieve eligible studies, we searched PubMed, Web of Science, and Scopus databases. The articles were screened and chosen by three researchers. The selection of studies and the data extraction from the studies were done by three researchers using the data collection form based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Disagreements were resolved by consulting the third and fourth researchers. To report scoping review, we used the PRISMA checklist.

Results: A total of 174 articles were retrieved from three databases and after removing irrelevant and repetitive articles, 15 articles were included in the current review. All studies were performed in Asia countries. Most studies have examined the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety (45%), stress (30%), and then depression (25%), respectively. The Beck Depression Inventory was the most widely used tool to evaluate the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on reducing anxiety, depression and stress. "Reducing the level of anxiety, stress, and depression" and "Simple, affordable, practical and cost-effective treatment to reduce depression and anxiety" were the most important outcomes of holy Quran recitation.

Conclusions: Based on the results of this study, Quran recitation and listening can be applied as a useful nonpharmacological treatment to reduce anxiety, stress, and depression.

KEYWORDS

anxiety, depression, Holy Quran, Quran recitation, stress

1 | BACKGROUND

Anxiety, stress, and depressive disorders are very common mental health problems in different populations.^{1,2} These disorders can lead to physical, mental, emotional, psychological, social and financial challenges.³ Also, stress, anxiety and depression have been known as primary outcome measures in different work environments.⁴ It has been reported that anxiety and stress impact adrenal gland and neural system which, in an advanced process, results in an increase in hypertension, respiratory abnormalities, shortness of breath, enhancement in the rate of respiration and hearth rate, and in case of repetitious long exposure to chronic stress and anxiety, it results in cardiovascular disease and other diseases.⁵ Restlessness, unhappiness and sadness, reduction of appetite, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, palpitation, and disturbance and discomfort in concentration and doing daily actions are among the other signs and symptoms of these depressive, anxiety and stress-causing factors.^{5,6} One way to help reduce and manage these signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress is to use nonpharmacological interventions.⁷ Lately, a set of nonpharmacological technique, such as massage therapy,⁸ aromatherapy,⁹ relaxation techniques,¹⁰ music therapy,¹¹ Quran therapy^{9,12} and have been applied to reductions of depression, anxiety, and stress.⁷ Various studies have shown the effect of Quran therapy on reducing stress,^{9,13} anxiety^{14,15} and depression.¹⁵

The Holy Quran as a Muslim's book that surrounds all aspects of human life.⁷ Recitation of this book is a kind of mystical music that chips in to the product of endorphins by stimulating alpha brain waves.¹⁶ Hence, it raises the stress threshold, reduces negative emotions, and makes a sensation of relaxation.⁷ Based on different clinical trials, recitation of the Holy Quran has been efficacious in relieving labor pain,¹⁷ anxiety,^{14,15} depression,¹³ postcesarean pain,¹⁸ and the duration of the active phase of labor.¹⁷ The verses of the Qur'an also confirm the effect of the Qur'an on the peace of hearts. For example, in Thunder or Ar-Ra'd surah of Quran, the 28th verse, (13th chapter), it is express that " the ones who believe and whose hearts feel tranquil through remembering Allah surely hearts feel tranquil whenever Allah is mentioned".¹⁹ Also, in surah Al-Isra, verse 82 (17th chapter), it is stated that "what we sent from the Qur'an, is healing and mercy for believers".¹⁹

Given the importance and role of the Holy Quran in the lives of Muslims and the growing interest in using nonpharmacological interventions to treat disorders such as anxiety, stress and depression, the aim of this study is investigating the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety, stress, and depression.

2 | MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a scoping review to investigate the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety, stress, and depression. The results of this study reported based on the PRISMA scoping reviews checklist.²⁰

2.1 | Information sources and search strategy

A structured literature search on the article title, abstract, and keywords, was conducted in the following bibliographic databases: Pub Med, Scopus, and Web of Science. To find related articles in these databases, the following keywords and search strategy were used:

((Quran) AND (anxiety OR stress OR depression))

This search strategy was developed by two researchers (KHM, and FD) and finally approved by KB and AH. The literature search on databases was conducted on February 2, 2022. In addition, no limitations were imposed on the starting point of the search of all three databases.

2.2 | Eligibility criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are listed below.

2.3 | Inclusion criteria

- Articles that focused on the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety, stress, or depression
- Articles published in English
- Human study

2.4 | Exclusion criteria

- Excluded the study protocols, review studies, letters to the editors, and conference abstracts
- Studies with no outcomes

2.5 | Selection of sources of evidence

All articles from three databases Pub Med, Scopus, and Web of Science were imported into EndNote (version x 9.1) to remove duplicate articles and final screening. Then, titles, abstracts, and keywords were screened by three researchers (KHM, RM and FD). Articles convergence the inclusion criteria, and those for which the first researcher was in doubt, were reexamined a second time by two additional researchers (KB and AH). In instances of disagreement, a meeting between all three researchers specified inclusion or exclusion. Figure 1 shows the study selection process.

It should be noted that we emailed the corresponding author of the articles for which we did not have access to the full text.

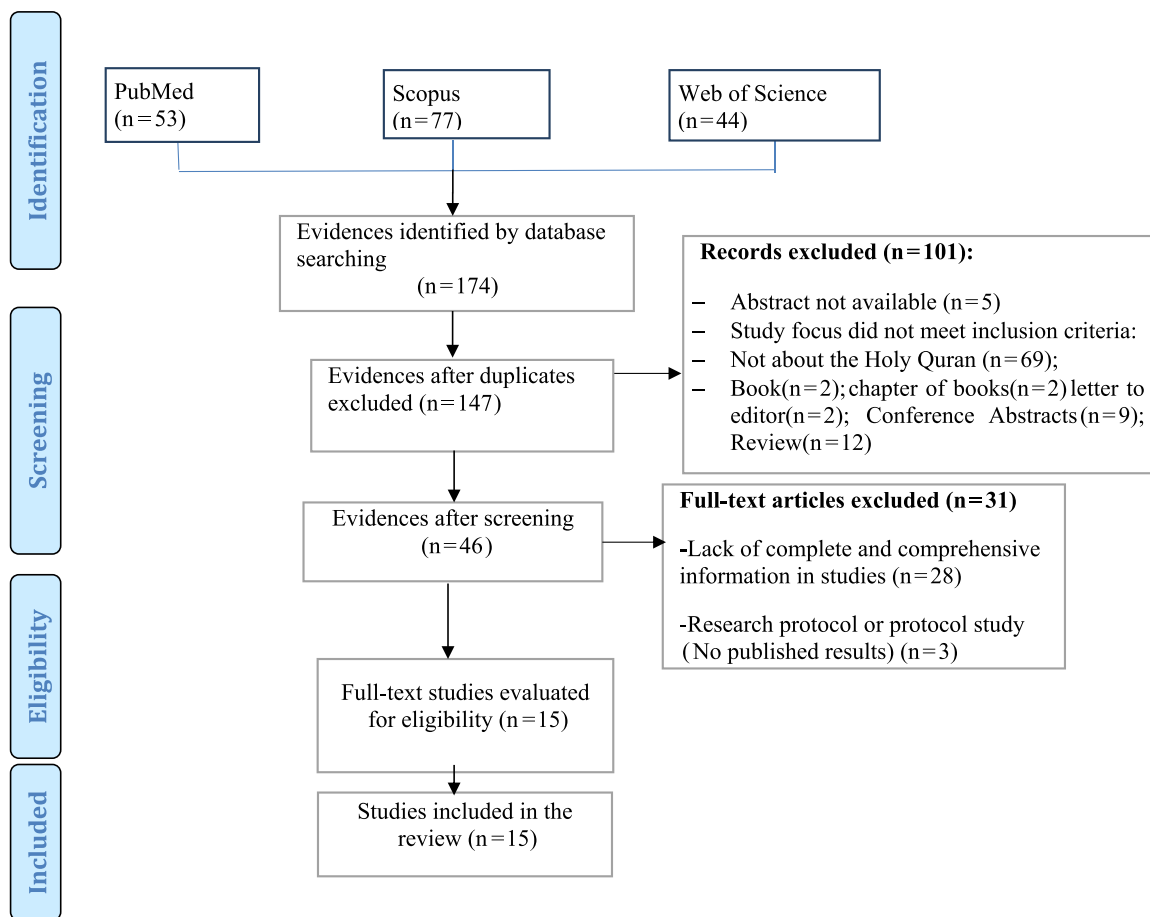


FIGURE 1 Study selection process.

2.6 | Data charting process and data items

Data was extracted from the included articles by a pre-designed form. This form contained fields such as: year, country, type of study, purpose, target group, sample size, age, participant groups, type of disorder, interventions and comparisons, intervention duration, data collection tools, intervention outcomes, and study conclusions. The validity of this form was confirmed by two medical informatics specialists. The data extraction was done by two of the researchers (KHM and FD) and later re-examined and finalized by two researchers (KB and AH). Finally, the extracted data were entered into an Excel file.

2.7 | Synthesis of result

After the extracted data were entered into an Excel file, we qualitatively categorized different data related to the effect of the holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety, stress, and depression and reported the results and their frequency. One of the authors (KHM) reviewed and corrected the data (e.g., spell check, cell formatting) to ensure that Excel procedures, calculations, and analyzes (e.g., construction of pivot tables, graphs) were performed

accurately and adequately. Next, we performed descriptive analyzes (e.g., frequency, percentage) on the extracted data to describe the findings of the included studies. The results of the descriptive data and the findings of the articles entered in Excel were presented in the form of tables and figures after analysis.

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Selection of sources evidence

In generally, 174 articles were retrieved. After excluding duplicates, the remaining 147 articles were studied and evaluated based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Eventually, 15 articles were included in the study. The results of the search and study selection are shown in Figure 1.

3.2 | Characteristics of the included studies

An overview of selected studies is presented in Table 1.

All studies were performed in Asia countries. Most studies were performed in Indonesia ($n = 5$)^{9,12,13,26,28} and Iran ($n = 3$),^{14,15,24}

TABLE 1 Overview of studies included in the study.

Ref	Country	Year	Study type	Study purpose	The target group in the study			Sample size	Age	Participants	Type of disorder			Type of intervention	
					Women	Men	✓(n = 39)				Depression	Anxiety	Stress	Listening to the Quran	Reciting the Quran
[21]	Saudi Arabia	2016	RCT	Examining the outcome of listening to Quran recitation in reduction of physiological marks of stress during mechanical ventilation and after weaning	✓(n = 16)	✓(n = 39)	55	Experimental group = 54 ± 0.5 years - Control groups = 56.4 ± 18.5 years	Patients admitted in the intensive care unit (ICU) and on mechanical ventilation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
[22]	Turkey	2016	Cross sectional, case-control survey	Examining the relation of religious tendencies and behaviors with depression in boarding Quran course students	✓(n = 383)	✓(n = 573)	956	Median age of participants 16 years (minimum 13 - maximum 23)	Students	✓				✓	
[23]	Pakistan	2017	Pretest-posttest experimental	Survey the effect of Surah Al-Rehman to reducing depression in women with major depressive disorder	✓(n = 12)		12	Female patients aged 18 and 30 years	Patient with depression	✓				✓	
[24]	Iran	2017	RCT	Analyzing the outcome of the Quran recitation on depressing indications in hemodialysis patients	✓(n = 23)	✓(n = 31)	54	18-65 years	Hemodialysis patients			✓		✓	
[14]	Iran	2017	RCT	Examine the effect of holy Qur'an recitation on anxiety in patients with hemodialysis	✓(n = 25)	✓(n = 35)	60	18-65 years	Hemodialysis patients			✓		✓	
[25]	Tunisia	2017	Not mentioned	Investigating the effect of listening to the recitation of the Quran to increase the beneficial effects of physical practices on physiological and psychological measurements in elderly patients undergoing hemodialysis	✓(n = 53)		53	Intervention group (age 65.4 ± 3.2 years) - Control group (age 64.5 ± 4.2 years)	Elderly patients undergoing hemodialysis			✓		✓	

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Ref	Country	Year	Study type	Study purpose	The target group in the study			Sample size	Age	Participants	Type of disorder			Type of intervention	
					Women	Men	Age				Depression	Anxiety	Stress	Listening to the Quran	Reciting the Quran
[15]	Iran	2017	RCT	Examining the impacts of Quran on anxiety, stress, and depression pregnant women	√(n = 168)	—	168	(Mean 27.2 (SD: 6.6))	Pregnant women	√	√	√	√	√	
[12]	Indonesia	2018	Quasi-experiment	Investigating the effect of Murotal Al Quran therapy on reduction of pain and anxiety in maternity in the first stage of maternity	√(n = 20)	—	20	—	Maternity mothers	√	—	—	√	—	
[26]	Indonesia	2019	Case report	Investigating the effect of giving Murottal Al-Qur 'on reducing anxiety in hemodialysis patients	√(n = 1)	—	1	48-year-old	Hemodialysis	√	—	—	√	—	
[13]	Indonesia	2019	Pretest-posttest experimental	Investigating the effect of the holy Qur'an recitation on the level of anxiety of presurgery Patients	—	—	27	—	Of presurgery Patients	√	√	√	√	√	
[27]	United Arab Emirates	2021	Semi-experimental	Determining the outcome of listening to the holy Qur'an on several psychological and physical features among practitioners of yoga practices among students	√(n = 40)	√(n = 40)	80	—	Students	√	√	√	√	√	
[28]	Indonesia	2020	Quasi-experiment	Examining the impact of listening to the recitation of holy Qur'an (specifically Ar-Rahman surah) on the degree of anxiety and the time of the first phase of labor in pregnant women	√(n = 40)	—	40	17-40 years	Pregnant women	√	—	—	√	—	

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Ref	Country	Year	Study type	Study purpose	The target group in the study			Age	Participants	Type of disorder			Type of intervention	
					Women	Men	Sample size			Depression	Anxiety	Stress	Listening to the Quran	Reciting the Quran
[9]	Indonesia	2020	Quasi-experimental	Investigating the impact of holy Qur'an recitation on reduction of stress levels in patients with cancer	√(n = 28)	√(n = 22)	50	45 – 70 years	Patient with cancer	√	√	√	√	√
[29]	Pakistan	2021	RCT	Examining the effectiveness of audition of recitation of Surah Al-Rahman versus relaxation music in reducing stress among medical students	√(n = 28)	√(n = 32)	60	16-23 years	Medical students	√	√	√	√	√
[11]	Iraq	2021	Clinical trial	Evaluating the effectiveness of listening to music or Quran in reduction of cancer patients' anxiety ahead chemotherapy administration	√(n = 84)	√(n = 75)	159	Mean (SD) = 45.9 (14.06)	Cancers (breast cancer, leukemia, cancer of prostate, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, multiple myeloma, cancer of the pancreas, Hodgkin's lymphoma and cancer of the liver)	√	√	√	√	√

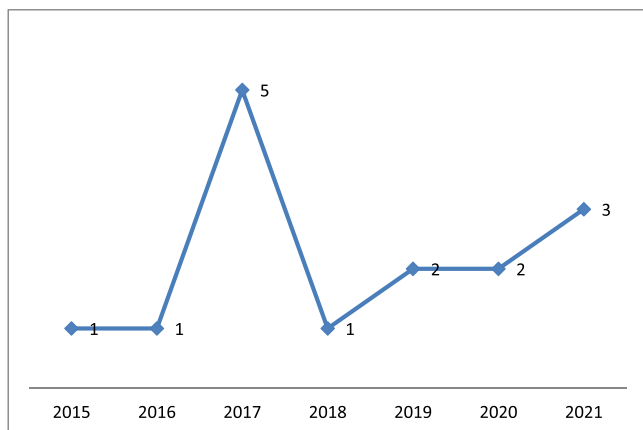


FIGURE 2 Distribution of the studies in terms of publication year.

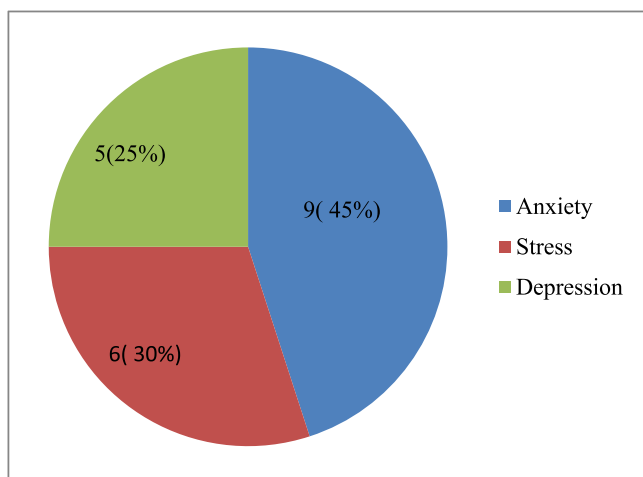


FIGURE 3 The distribution of the studies based on type of disorder. (In some studies, more than one disorder was reported).

respectively. Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, most studies were published in 2017^{14,15,23–25} and 2019 to 2021.^{9,11–13,21,22,26–29} No study was published before 2015. (More details in Table 1)

As shown in Figure 3, most studies have examined the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety ($n = 9$, 45%),^{11–15,25–28} stress ($n = 6$, 30%)^{9,13,15,21,27,29} and then depression^{13,15,22–24} ($n = 5$, 25%), respectively.

The maximum duration of studies to evaluate the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening was 6 months.^{9,22} These studies examined the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on depression²² and anxiety and stress,⁹ respectively.

According to Table 2, four types of questionnaires, neuropsychological tests, laboratory tests, and medical devices were used to evaluate the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on depression, anxiety, and stress. Among these four tools, the questionnaire was used more. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) questionnaire was used more than other questionnaires.^{22–24}

Table 3 shows 12 different outcomes of Holy Quran Recitation. “Reducing the level of anxiety,” “reducing the level of stress,” and “reducing the level of depression” were the most important outcomes of Holy Quran Recitation.

4 | DISCUSSION

In this study, the effect of reciting the Holy Quran on anxiety, stress, and depression was investigated. Most of the studies investigated the effect of the Quran on anxiety. Four types of questionnaires, neuropsychological tests, laboratory tests, and medical equipment were used to investigate the effect of reciting the Holy Quran on depression, anxiety, and stress. Among these four tools, the questionnaire was the most used tool. 12 outcomes of listening to the Holy Quran were identified. In the following, each of these outcomes are discussed.

4.1 | Reducing the level of anxiety

The findings of the present study showed that listening to the Quran reduces the level of anxiety. Some studies^{11,13–15,25–28} have shown that nonpharmacological treatments such as the Holy Quran have a protective effect on reducing and managing anxiety. Since the Quran is full of important teachings and instructions needed by humans, people can reduce their anxiety. In the holy book of the Qur'an, Allah gives advice for the treatment of severe anxiety with beautiful verses. For example, Allah invites man to calm down and get away from anxiety with this verse, « those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort? (Ar-Ra'd, verse 28).¹⁹ In another verse of the Holy Qur'an, we read that whoever turns away from My Reminder will certainly have a miserable life, 1 then We will raise them up blind on the Day of Judgment” (Taha, verse 124).¹⁹ But whoever disregards my remembrance, his shall be a wretched life. It is clear that the difficulty of life in this verse is not material poverty; because people may be very rich, but despite having all the material facilities, they do not feel peace of mind and are constantly in anxiety and worry. The reason is very obvious, someone who has forgotten Allah in life has no choice but to depend on the material world and take its advantage. On the other hand, the material benefit of each person does not satisfy him; because he is not satisfied with the amount he has achieved and he is looking for more profit and, in this way, he does not limit himself to a certain limit, as a result he is always anxious. It is also stated in another place of this divine book that « It is only those who are faithful and do not tarnish their faith with falsehood who are guaranteed security and are rightly guided. (Al-An'am, verse 82).¹⁹ Those who have faith and do not taint their faith with wrongdoing—for such there shall be safety, and they are the [rightly] guided. Because true faith in Allah makes a person hopeful about Allah's help, support, and grace, and he feels that Allah is always with him and helps him. Therefore, he is not afraid of the

TABLE 2 Types of tools to evaluate the effect of Holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety, depression and stress.

Tools	Type of disorder	Tools type	Frequency	References
Questionnaire	Anxiety	State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)	2	[14, 15]
		Hamilton Rating Scale for Anxiety (HRS A)	2	[12, 26]
		Numeric Rating Scale (NRS)	1	[12]
		Short-Form Health Survey (SF-36)	1	[25]
		Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)	1	[25]
		Depression, Anxiety and Stress (DASS)	1	[13]
	Stress	Depression, Anxiety and Stress (DASS)	2	[9, 13]
		Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)	1	[15]
		Researcher-made questionnaire	1	[27]
	Depression	Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)	3	[22–24]
		Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)	1	[15]
		Depression, Anxiety and Stress (DASS)	1	[13]
Neuropsychological tests (a paper and pencil test)	Anxiety	d2 Test of Attention	1	[27]
	Stress	d2 Test of Attention	1	[27]
Laboratory test	Stress	ELISA method to measure cortisol levels	1	[29]
Medical devices	Stress	Mechanical ventilation (MV) for recorded the physiological factors such as respiratory rate (RR), heart rate (HR), diastolic blood pressure (DBP), systolic blood pressure (SBP), mean artery pressure (MAP), and saturation of partial oxygen (SPO2) of patients	1	[21]

sufferings of the times, because he believes that the events are a test and perfection for him from Allah. A true believer will never be troubled by guilt, because he knows that Allah is forgiving. Various studies have also shown that reciting different chapters of the Quran reduces the anxiety of heart patients,³⁰ hemodialysis patients,³¹ and students,³² athletes before the start of the competition³³ and improves their physical condition and quality of life³¹ of people.

In general, it can be said that today there is severe anxiety in the lives of all of us. Worldly life and situations and conditions such as illness, poverty, death of loved ones, unpleasant memories, fear of the future, etc., put pressure on a person. The pressures of life cause severe anxiety and stress and deprive people of peace. Recitation, reflection and thinking in the light verses of the Holy Qur'an removes anxiety-provoking conditions from a person and makes the worldly life with hardships easy for him. Because the best way to get rid of anxiety and worry is to pray to Allah and establish communication and trust in him. "Allah, who is able to do everything and is nearer to him than his jugular vein" (Surah Qaaf, verse 16).¹⁹ So, if a person wants something from him, he will give it to him.

4.2 | Reducing the level of stress

Other findings of our study showed that listening to Quran recitation and listening reduces the level of stress. Various studies^{34,35} have shown that today's stresses are increasing concerns that are related to religious behaviors, and people who benefit from religious behaviors such as remembering Allah, praying, and reciting the Qur'an ace less stress in their personal and social life.³⁶ Sadeghi et al.³⁷ concluded that religious behaviors such as listening to the Quran and/or reciting it can reduce stress and anxiety among hospitalized patients. For example, it has been proven that listening and/or reciting Surah Fatiha and Yasin significantly reduced the level of stress in patients admitted to the intensive care unit.³⁸

Reciting the Quran has acted as a protective factor for the prevention and treatment of stress and depression, through which people can deal with negative experiences in their lives and overcome them.³⁹ The Holy Quran is full of verses that have a great impact on achieving peace. As an example of reciting the verses "There is no Allah worthy of worship except you. Glory be to you!

TABLE 3 Outcomes of Holy Quran recitation and listening on anxiety, depression and stress.

Outcomes	References	Frequency
Reducing the level of anxiety	[11, 13–15, 25–28]	8
Reducing the level of stress	[9, 15, 21, 27, 29]	5
Reducing the level of depression	[15, 22–24]	4
Simple, affordable, practical and cost-effective treatment to reduce depression and anxiety	[14, 24]	2
More relaxing and calm the heart with listening to holy Quran	[13, 29]	2
Improving the level of mood and attention	[27]	1
Reducing heart rate and increasing muscle relaxation	[27]	1
Increasing meditative effectiveness and relaxing performance	[27]	1
Production of cortisol hormones and reduction in the time of labor	[28]	1
Reducing the level of pain	[12]	1
Improvement in physical status and quality of life	[25]	1
Supply peace, reduction of fear and get closer to Allah and strengthen moral belief	[13]	1

I have certainly done wrong” (Surah Al-Anbya, verse 87); “Allah alone is sufficient as an aid for us and He is the best Protector” (Surah Ali Imran, verse 173); “You will remember what I say to you, and I entrust my affairs to Allah. Surely Allah is All-Seeing of all His servants” (Surah Ghafir, verse 44) can be very useful in reducing stress and achieving peace.¹⁹ This holy book is also full of different stories, the study of which can greatly reduce people's stress and anxiety. As an example, it is mentioned in the story of Prophet Ayyub that Allah Almighty afflicted him with a very difficult disease and killed all his children. “And then, he healed him and returned his children to him. And he did this according to his mercy so that his story would be a reminder to the worshippers” (Surah Anbiya, verses 83 and 84).¹⁹ Another story is related to Prophet Moses that his mother put her trust in Allah in a difficult and stressful situation and Allah sent peace to her (Surah Al-Qasas, verses 7 to 13).⁴⁰

In general, to overcome stress, in addition to reciting numerous verses of the Holy Quran, you can read various stories that are mentioned in the Quran and reduce the amount of stress caused by different situations. As other examples in the Qur'an, educational and therapeutic stories such as the stories of Seven Sleepers, the owner of two gardens and his poor friend, Moses and the learned man, and Dhu al-Qarnayn, explain the role of the characters in the story as an efficient and effective model. The Qur'an has introduced the characters of the stories in hardships for humans, so that in this way they can deal with

their inner challenges and stresses and improve their mental health as a result. Therefore, by studying the Quranic stories, the story of the ups and downs of the prophets, which were full of difficult and stressful moments, is shown. Prophets and saints were in different and complicated situations and by controlling their anxiety and maintaining their calmness, they can be role model for today's people.

4.3 | Reducing the level of depression

Decreasing depression through Quran recitation and listening was another outcome of this scoping review. The Holy Quran is the only reliable source of life; with a comprehensive look at humans, their needs, and their existential capacity, it has given instructions to stay healthy from nervous attacks, depression, and any other disease.⁴¹ To reduce depression, the Holy Quran has mentioned in its verses that those who, when an affliction visits them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him do we indeed return” (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 156).¹⁹ He also says: “O my sons! Go and search diligently for Joseph and his brother. And do not lose hope in the mercy of Allah, for no one loses hope in Allah's mercy except those with no faith” (Surah Yusuf, verse 87).¹⁹ Indeed no one despairs of Allah's mercy except the faithless lot. In another verse, we have “Say, O Prophet, that Allah says, O my servants who have exceeded the limits against their souls! Do not lose hope in Allah's mercy, for Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is indeed the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (Az-Zumar, verse 53).¹⁹ Say [that Allah declares,] “O my servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah will forgive all sins. Indeed, He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful. In another place, he says about the continuous experience of unhappiness which itself causes depression. “Perhaps you dislike something which is good for you and like something which is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know” (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 216).¹⁹ Warfare has been prescribed for you, though it is repulsive to you. Yet it may be that you dislike something, which is good for you, and it may be that you love something, which is bad for you, and Allah knows and you do not know.

In general, it can be said that the Holy Quran expresses the goals and duties of Muslims in all its chapters and verses. Surahs and verses that, by reciting, try to educate and transform the lives of the reciters and improve their physical and mental health. Therefore, reciting and listening to the verses of the Holy Quran, as well as carefully and thinking about these verses can save a person from depression caused by the affairs and sufferings of life. For example, other studies showed that reciting the Quran as a nonpharmacological treatment was able to significantly reduce depression in CKD patients undergoing hemodialysis⁴² and college students.⁴³

4.4 | Simple, affordable, practical, and cost-effective treatment to reduce depression and anxiety

In the present study, the findings also showed that reciting verses of the Quran is a simple, practical and cost-effective treatment method

to reduce the level of anxiety and depression. Regarding the importance of Quranic verses and its connection with mental health such as stress, anxiety and depression, the World Health Organization recommended that Islamic countries prepare a booklet (in electronic or paper form) containing Quranic verses related to mental health, which can be used at any time.³³ Therefore, in stressful and anxious situations, people can take advantage of this book and calm themselves without needing to go to medical centers and spend money. Also, interaction with other people suffering from stress, depression, and anxiety through websites designed for online education, memorization, and interpretation of Quranic verses can improve people's mental health and prevent them from frequent visits to medical centers.^{44,45} In general, information and communication technology today improve the provision of health care for all people. These technologies can reduce the cost and difficulty of long-term trips for medical care and diagnosis with capabilities such as making information available, communicating with clinical experts, and sharing clinical documents.^{46,47}

4.5 | Improving the level of mood and attention

This review also showed that reciting the Qur'an improves people's mood and attention. People can improve their level of mood and attention by following the morals of the people introduced in the Quran, such as the beloved Prophet of Islam (Muhammad). In one of its verses, the Holy Qur'an refers to the beloved Prophet of Islam and says: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example" (Surah Ahzab verse 21).¹⁹ The Holy Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was a perfect example of a good carnal and the possessor of all human virtues, and he greatness and confirmation of this meaning is revealed when we know that Allah, the Wise, has commanded and praised His Prophet to have a great creation: "And you are truly a man of outstanding character" (Surah Al Qalam, verse 4).¹⁹ This good moral has not only influenced his relatives and Muslims, but even his enemies have been attracted by his character and have admitted it. Also, in some cases, the goodness of His Holiness has caused some people to believe in Islam. In another verse of the Holy Qur'an, we read that "tell my believing servants to say only what is best. Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them. Satan is indeed a sworn enemy to humankind." (Surah Isra' verse 53).¹⁹ It means tell my servants to speak in a manner which is the best. Indeed, Satan incites ill feeling between them, and Satan is indeed man's manifest enemy.¹⁹ In this Qur'anic verse, Allah commands His servants to observe politeness and speak in the best manner when discussing and speaking with other people. Their words should be mixed with politeness, respect and magnanimity as well as sober and rational. Lest they answer the baseless and unjust words of the opponents like them; because this causes sedition and corruption among people, and their hearts are separated, and hatred and enmity rise. In the other two verses, we read like this: "speak kindly to people" (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 83).¹⁹ "And say what is right."

(Surah AL-Ahzab verse 70).¹⁹ Therefore, it can be said that these verses indicate that if people make the Holy Prophet or other prophets introduced in the Qur'an as their moral model, they can improve their mood and attention level.

In general, it can be said that the Qur'an is considered by Muslims as a book of law, prayer, wisdom, worship and a unique and comprehensive sacred text that includes everything that is, basically related to human conditions, affairs and moral principles. For this reason, all people consider it the most fundamental basis of faith and the formation of the character and temperament of a Muslim and Islamic civilization, which can help people have a meaningful moral life and improve their behavior.⁴⁸ On the other hand, reciting and listening to the verses of the Holy Quran are described as moral virtues for humans, which can be moral qualities such as faith, obedience, trust in Allah, the virtues of patience, wisdom, justice, beneficence, and increase e pleasant family and social relationships in humans. With the formation of moral traits and virtues in humans, the growth and development and happiness of the human individual and human society will be achieved with these selected human ethics and traits.^{43,49} Zaidah et al.⁵⁰ proved in their study that listening to the verses of the Holy Quran can improve their character.

4.6 | More relaxing and calm the heart by listening to the holy qura

Another finding of our study was the effect of listening to the verses of the Holy Quran in increasing people's level of relaxation. Studies^{51,52} have pointed out that if the Qur'an is recited with knowledge, its effects will be observed in life and without doubt, peace will be created in the heart, mind and body of a person. One of the divine verses that bring peace in personal life and solve problems is verse 28 of Surah Ar-Ra'd "those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort?".¹⁹ However, it must be said that human beings seek infinity and always want absolute perfection, but since everything other than Allah is limited and has a temporary existence, their hearts cannot rest except with Allah. Therefore, a person can reach peace by praying, reciting the Qur'an and remembering Allah.⁵³⁻⁵⁵ According to the study conducted by Nayef et al.,⁴⁰ the Quran eases heart rate, breathing and emotions. They showed that listening to the recitation of the Quran can control the functioning of the brain to reduce the level of anxiety, fatigue and boredom, and as a result, a person can relax.

The word "heart" is very common in the Qur'an and is of special importance. But what is meant by the heart is not the physical dimensions and physical relaxation of this muscle-shaped organ that is, located on the left side of the body. e.g., we have: "Have they not traveled throughout the land so their hearts may reason, and their ears may listen? Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts in the chests that grow blind" (Surah Al-Hajj, verse 46)¹⁹; and he says: "Certainly We have winnowed out for hell many of the jinn

and humans: they have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; indeed, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless." Surah Al-A'raf, verse 179)¹⁹; and it also says in the Qur'an: "He has written faith into their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Him" (Surah Al-Mujadila, verse 22).¹⁹ The position of the heart in the Qur'an is so great that when it comes to revelation; That is, the relationship between man and Allah is discussed, the heart is mentioned. Allah says to His Prophet in the Qur'an: "into your heart O Prophet—so that you may be one of the warners" (Surah Ash-Shu'ara, verse 194).¹⁹ Our life depends on the soul and the heart, and it controls the body, all the organs and parts, and all actions and movements originate from the heart.⁵⁶ Just as a person's body is sometimes healthy and sometimes sick, his heart is sometimes healthy and sometimes sick, Allah says in the Qur'an: "the Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit. Only those who come before Allah with a pure heart will be saved" (Ash-Shu'ara, verses 88 and 89).¹⁹ As you can see, in the verses of the Qur'an, health is attributed to the heart, and the afterlife happiness of a person depends on returning to Allah with a healthy and humble heart. On the other hand, the Qur'an introduces some hearts as sick hearts, and says: "There is sickness in their hearts, and Allah only lets their sickness increase. They will suffer a painful punishment for their lies" (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 10).¹⁹ Quranic verses are used in such a way that the human heart and soul have health and disease like the body. Matters such as disbelief, hypocrisy, arrogance, malice, anger, betrayal, selfishness, backbiting, greed and other ugly traits have been introduced as diseases of the heart and soul. Those who die with such hearts do not go to Allah with hearts that are healthy and full of peace. Therefore, reciting the verses of the Qur'an makes a person, in addition to having peace of mind in the world, return to Allah with a heart full of peace by removing sins and negative thoughts.

4.7 | Reducing heart rate and increasing muscle relaxation

The reviewed studies also showed that reciting the Quran reduces heart rate and increases muscle relaxation. To reduce the heart rate and relax the muscles for a long period of time, it has been emphasized to do exercise programs with low intensity and long intervals, healthy diet, no alcohol consumption, limited caffeine and slow breathing, good sleep and yoga.^{57,58} While the effect of the Quran on reducing heart rate and increasing muscle relaxation has been proven in various studies.⁵⁷⁻⁵⁹ Using hardware devices (electrocardiogram device) and software and artificial intelligence, researchers have proven that when the heart is engaged in reciting and listening to the verses of the Qur'an, its pressure and anxiety levels decrease, the heart rate and breathing calm down, as well as it has a positive effect on various dimensions of human psychology and as a result, it creates a state of relaxation in people.^{60,61}

4.8 | Increasing meditative effectiveness and relaxing performance

According to the findings of the reviewed studies, we found that reciting the Quran increases meditative effectiveness and relaxing performance. In some studies,⁶²⁻⁶⁶ meditation has been introduced as a potentially attractive and cost-effective supplement to more traditional medical treatments, which can cause better brain function, attention and memory, self-regulation activities, better function of sensory organs, and decrease the level of excitement and stress. Now the question is, how does the Holy Quran increase the effectiveness of meditation? When a reader or a person who listens to the verses of the Qur'an thinks and meditates on the verses of Allah's Word, he takes care of all his actions, speech and thoughts in order not to disobey the divine commands and his mental powers are organized in a precise manner. Finally, the productivity of mental powers increases.^{67,68} In the Holy Quran, there are many verses for thinking and reasoning. The Holy Qur'an says: Say, "Are those blind to the truth equal to those who can see? Will you not then reflect?" (Surah An'am, verse 50).¹⁹ In another verse, "it is mentioned that and He will bring His wrath upon those who are unmindful" (Surah Yunus, verse 100).¹⁹ In another verse, it refers to thinking about Allah's speech and says: "Is it because they have never contemplated the Word of Allah? Or because there has come to them something that did not come to their forefathers?" (Surah Al-Mu'minun, verse 68)¹⁹ and mentioned "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason" (Surah Al-Imran, verse 190).¹⁹

Therefore, it can be said that when a person thinks about the verses of the Qur'an and his surroundings, his mental powers increase and he can constantly identify and control his negative desires. After modifying the inside, in the higher stages, the soul is beautified, and by adding strong spiritual reserves and combining them with thinking and reflecting on the verses of the Qur'an, as well as reflecting on the names and attributes of the Lord, it helps to calm and ascend the soul.⁶⁹⁻⁷²

4.9 | Production of cortisol hormones and reduction in the time of labor

In this review, some studies showed that listening to the verses of the Quran causes the production of cortisol hormones and reduces the time of labor in women. An increase or decrease in excessive secretion of cortisol hormone can be due to a defect in emotion regulation and unstable conditions that must be controlled.⁷³ Some studies^{74,75} have shown that nonpharmacological methods of pain control are the first choice for many women as important components in midwifery care. Listening and reciting the Holy Quran as a nondrug method that is under the mother's control and is safe can be used for pregnant women during labor. In their study, Mutmainnah et al⁷⁶ showed that spirituality strongly influences the behavior of

Indonesian Muslim women in their pregnancy care. They introduced spiritual values such as remembrance of Allah, prayer and Quran recitation and listening during pregnancy and childbirth as very valuable. The pregnant women who participated in their study introduced the Quran as a mechanism to deal with feelings of sadness, fear and anxiety. In another study, Kongsuwan et al.⁷⁷ showed that reciting the Qur'an helps to reduce labor pain. Now, it should be said that listening to the verses of the Holy Quran can stimulate the delta waves that bring relaxation and comfort to the listeners, reduce stress hormones and activate natural endorphins (serotonin). As a result, through this mechanism, the sense of coolness increases, the feeling of fear, anxiety and tension decreases, and as a result, the chemical system of the body is improved through the reduction of blood pressure and breathing rate, heart rate, pulse and brain wave activity. A deeper or slower breathing rate can effectively induce relaxation, emotional control, deeper thinking and better metabolism. Therefore, Quran therapy is introduced and recommended in health centers, especially for pregnant women in the third trimester.⁷⁸⁻⁸⁴

In addition, the Holy Quran also tells a very beautiful story of Maryam's pregnancy and childbirth in Surah Maryam (Mary, the mother of Jesus) and depicts her story in the ordeal of pregnancy and childbirth. This story presents a story of faith, strength, and perseverance of a Muslim woman who sets an example for other women throughout history. Introducing these models and examples can help people to be more patient with the hardships and stresses of pregnancy, have self-control and overcome the anxiety and pain of childbirth.¹⁹

4.10 | Reducing the level of pain

The findings of the study reviewed in our study also showed that reciting the Quran reduces the level of pain in different people. Some studies⁸⁵ have shown that music can be used to promote health and well-being in clinical settings such as pain management, relaxation, psychotherapy and personal development. Music affects a person's health through neurochemical changes and leads to an increase in the feeling of pleasure and happiness and a decrease in stress and pain in people.⁸⁶ The recitation of the Holy Qur'an, apart from its semantic load and royal mood, also has a melodious and musical word. When a person recites the verses of the Qur'an with a beautiful song, this event itself has a musical meaning. On the other hand, reciting verses of the Quran with sadness is considered a kind of music. Therefore, it can be said that reciting the Qur'an is combined with music and is not outside the scope of music, so just as music is effective in managing and reducing pain, reciting and listening to the verses of the Qur'an can also help patients in managing and controlling pain. The verses of Surah Al-Fatihah, "all praise is for Allah—Lord of all worlds, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment".¹⁹ You alone we worship and you alone we ask for help. Guide us along the Straight Path, the Path of those you have blessed—not those you are displeased with, or those who are astray.¹⁹ Also, in verse 57 of

Surah Yunus, he says: "O humanity! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the believers".¹⁹ Since it is mentioned in the first verse about the healing of verses, it can be said that it is not only reserved for spiritual and mental diseases but the Qur'an can also be used as a cure for physical diseases. Suhandia et al.⁸⁷ showed in their study that Quran therapy is one of the effective ways to manage and control pain for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. The word "healing" is mentioned three times in the Qur'an with themes: 1-"We send down the Quran as a healing and mercy for the believers, but it only increases the wrongdoers in loss" (Surah Al-Isra, verse 82)¹⁹; 2- "As for those who disbelieve, there is deafness in their ears and blindness to it in their hearts. It is as if they are being called from a faraway place. Say, O Prophet, "It is a guide and a healing to the believers. As for those who disbelieve, there is deafness in their ears and blindness to it in their hearts. It is as if they are being called from a faraway place" (Surah Fussilat, verse 44)¹⁹; 3- "O humanity! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the believers" (Surah Yunus, Verse 57).¹⁹ Therefore, it can be said that the recitation and listening of the Qur'an does not have any adverse effect on a person's soul, mind, and spirit, on the contrary, it is good, blessed, and healing. Therefore, Amir Al-Mumineen Imam Ali (AS): Healing does not require seeking; Quran is a healing medicine that cures everything (Nahj al-Balagha, Khutbah 198).

4.11 | Improvement in physical stature and quality of life

Other findings of this scoping review showed that listening to the verses of the Qur'an improves a person's physical condition and quality of life. Various studies have shown⁸⁸⁻⁹¹ that various factors such as diseases, pregnancy, anxiety, stress, depression, social health, and physical and mental health affect people's quality of life and significantly reduce life expectancy in people. To improve the quality of life from a mental and physical perspective, you can do various activities related to sports, learning, helping others, creativity, compassion, and kindness to yourself and others. Sometimes affordable, culture-based, easy, and low-risk treatments such as music therapy, aromatherapy, nerve relaxation, yoga exercises, and exercise and study are suggested to improve the physical condition of people and their quality of life.⁹² In addition to these factors, in Islamic countries, doctors and researchers strongly recommend the use of therapies such as listening to the recitation of the Holy Quran as a way to improve the quality of life of people, especially patients, and they have introduced it as a very useful and effective form of music therapy.^{93,94} In addition, listening to the recitation of the Qur'an, which is considered one of the forms of music therapy, can stimulate the release of endorphins in the brain and positively affect the quality of a person's life. In addition, it has been shown that music therapy reduces the release of epinephrine and norepinephrine from the adrenal gland and affects blood pressure, heart rate, and mood,

and enhances happiness and life expectancy in humans.⁹⁵ Therefore, the secretion and regulation of these hormones, which are the most important hormones in the body, causes more relaxation and concentration, a happier mood, easier sleep, better food digestion, bone health, and ultimately physical and mental health in any condition and situation, and as a result the quality of a person's life increases.⁹⁶ Pramesona et al.⁹⁶ showed that reciting the Quran was very effective on depression and improving the quality of life among Indonesian elderly in nursing homes. Kim and his colleagues⁹⁷ have also found that other forms of music therapy, including Quran recitation, are very effective in relieving anxiety and improving the quality of life in hemodialysis patients. Henry et al.⁹⁸ stated that listening to the recitation of the Qur'an in Arabic using traditional sounds brings better harmony between the body and soul of a person and improves mood and quality of life.

4.12 | Supply peace, reduction of fear and get closer to Allah and strengthen moral belief

In the current study, a study⁹⁹ also showed that listening to the verses of Surah Rahman supplies peace, reduction of fear and getting closer to Allah and strengthens moral belief, and calms the heart. Other studies have also shown that religion and religious resources are related to the important consequences of human mental and physical health¹⁰⁰ and when a human being is separated from himself, his creator, and his personal and social life, he feels fear, anger, anxiety, and depression. Connecting with the Creator and religious resources is effective as a spiritual intervention to help people overcome their fear, anger, and stress. In the study of Khan et al.,¹⁰¹ it is also mentioned that reciting the Holy Quran and listening to it is an important intervention to reconnect people to life and achieve mental, psychological, and physical peace, which can control heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, brain waves, temperature and muscle pressure and bring peace to humans (40).

5 | LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations to this study. In this review, only studies in English were reviewed, and we did not review studies published in other languages. It is suggested to include articles published in non-English languages in future studies. Also, to find relevant studies, we searched only three scientific databases: Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science. Therefore, it is suggested to conduct other studies on a larger number of databases to obtain more comprehensive results.

6 | CONCLUSION

In this scoping review, we delved into the impact of reciting and listening to the Holy Quran on anxiety, stress, and depression. Our comprehensive analysis reveals that the recitation of the Quran has a notable positive influence on these mental health factors. Specifically,

it can alleviate anxiety, reduce stress levels, mitigate symptoms of depression, and bolster overall mental well-being. Through contemplation and engagement with the Quranic verses, individuals gain valuable insights into self-awareness, emotional management, and the resilience needed to confront the stresses, anxieties, and depressions stemming from contemporary life. This process not only promotes mental health but also contributes to the holistic well-being of the body and the preservation of the soul.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Khadijeh Moulai: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Funding acquisition; Methodology; Project administration; Validation; Visualization; Writing—original draft. **Ali-Akbar Haghdooost:** Data curation; Investigation; Methodology; Writing—review and editing. **Kambiz Bahaadinbeigy:** Data curation; Funding acquisition; Investigation; Methodology; Writing—review and editing. **Fatemeh Dinari:** Formal analysis; Investigation; Visualization; Writing—original draft; Writing—review and editing.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data supporting the findings of this study are available in the supplementary material to this article.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The lead author Fatemeh Dinari affirms that this manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study being reported; that no important aspects of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned (and, if relevant, registered) have been explained.

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