

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ATTITUDE OF FULFILLING THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY BEFORE DEATH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Death in the elderly is a common occurrence, although most of the elderly are afraid of experiencing it. Therefore, mental and spiritual readiness is needed so that elderly people who are nearing death can die in a calm and peaceful state. Objective: to understand the description of the attitude of the elderly in fulfilling spiritual needs before death (meaning, goals and hopes of life, relationship with God and spiritual practices). Method: using descriptive survey design. The population was 105 respondents, taking 51 samples, using a simple random sampling technique. Sampling used simple random sampling. Results: research shows that the majority of elderly people are based on a median age of 68 years, are female (57%), have lived in an institution for >3 years (59%), suffer from degenerative diseases (63%), and have adequate compliance attitudes. spiritual needs of the elderly nearing death (98%). The elderly need to increase their actions to fulfill their spiritual needs to prepare for death calmly and peacefully.

Keywords: attitude; dying; elderly; spiritual needs

### **INTRODUCTION**

Southeast Asia has data on the elderly population of 142 million (8%) (Ernawati et al., 2022). Based on data from the Elderly Analysis in Indonesia, the number of elderly people is estimated to increase by 10.7% in 2020. This figure is projected to continue to increase until it reaches 19.9% in 2045 (BPS, 2021). In 2021, the elderly in Central Java reached 12.71% (BPS Central Java, 2021). According to BPS data for Kendal Regency in 2022, population data for the elderly category (>60 years old) is 54,537 people for the male gender and 56,642 people for the female gender. In January 2023, at the Kendal Elderly Social Home (PPSLU), data on the elderly was obtained with a total of 146 elderly people (44 males and 102 females). The data on the elderly who have died in 2022 is 35 elderly people (12 men and 23 women). In 2020, almost half of the elderly in Indonesia experienced health complaints, as many as 48.14% experienced physical and psychological complaints, while the elderly who experienced illness reached 24.35%. For the last six years, the pain rate has been at its lowest point (Wibowo and Sugiyanto, 2022). Based on WHO data in 2019, the death rate of the elderly aged 65 years and over in the world is 57%. In Asia, elderly deaths are reported at 59%. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, deaths in the elderly were recorded at 51% (Experiment DK., 2022).

In the course of time, the elderly will definitely experience the aging process such as a decrease in immunity, easily attacked by diseases that can cause death, these are signs of aging experienced by the elderly (Fauziah dkk., 2022). Diseases experienced by the elderly in general are degenerative diseases in the form of heart disease, diabetes mellitus, stroke, rheumatism and injury, because in this process the elderly will experience a phase of regression (Wibowo and Sugiyanto, 2022). Death is a scary thing for every human being, especially the elderly. Physiologically, the elderly experience a decrease in physical and psychological functions, this can be a factor that causes the elderly to experience a decrease in quality of life. The elderly who cannot adapt to their declining physical condition, the elderly will consider death as a stressor that can cause fear and worry. An

important approach to preparing the elderly for death is spiritual needs (Hamid dkk., 2020). This research is in line with Muhammad Risal, et al. (2021 in Tiara Dewi, 2023), who said that the approach of spirituality is when a person experiences death, which is directed in such a way that the person can experience reality in a different way and can experience the final stages of life in relation to peace and tranquility. Because, the person experiences a return to the creator. Research shows that spiritual aspects, namely religious beliefs and beliefs, affect the fulfillment of life needs such as social, mental and other aspects of life.

The fulfillment of spiritual needs given to the elderly is 3, namely meaning, purpose and life expectancy, for example, nurses are able to provide explanations to the elderly about the diseases experienced; relationship with God, for example, nurses are able to give confidence to the elderly about every disease and healing is all God's will; Spiritual practices, for example, nurses are able to provide worship facilities to the elderly. Therefore, the fulfillment of the spiritual needs of the elderly must be carried out so that the elderly who are about to die can die in a calm and peaceful state. A preliminary study conducted on October 3, 2023 at the Cepiring Elderly Social Home (PPSLU) obtained data on the elderly with a total of 105 elderly people (47 males and 58 females). The data on the elderly who have died in 2023 is 12 elderly people (5 men and 7 women). Spiritual activities that are routinely carried out by the elderly at the Cepiring Kendal Elderly Service Home (PPSLU) are: reading Asmaul Husna routinely every morning before starting activities, once a week recitation is held which is attended by the elderly at the orphanage prayer room, reading yasin and tahlil every Friday night and 5-time congregational prayers which are carried out at the orphanage prayer room. From the preliminary study, the researcher is interested in conducting research on "An Overview of the Attitude of Fulfilling the Spiritual Needs of the Elderly Towards Death at the Cepiring Elderly Social Service Home (PPSLU)".

## METHOD

This study uses a descriptive survey research design. The population was 105 respondents by taking 51 samples. The sample was collected using a simple random sampling technique, with a SNAP (Spiritual Needs Assessment For Patients) questionnaire measuring tool.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1  
 Characteristics of Respondents by Age (n=51)

Variable	Median	Min	Max	94% CI	
				Lower	Upper
Age	68	53	101	65	71

Table 1. The results of the age normality data test obtained abnormal distributed data because of the p value 0.02 (p value <0.05). Therefore, the categorization of variables is seen at the median value. The age of the respondents based on the median value was 68 years old, with the youngest age being 53 years old and the oldest being 101 years old.

Table 2

Respondent Characteristics by Gender, Length of Stay and Degenerative Diseases (n=51)			
Variable		f	%
Gender			
Man		22	43
Woman		29	57
	Total	51	100
Length of Stay			
<1 year		5	10
1-3 years		16	31
>3 years		30	59
	Total	51	100
Degenerative Diseases			
There are degenerative diseases		17	33
No degenerative diseases		34	67
	Total	51	100

Table 2. Female respondents were 29 (57%). The length of stay was 30 (59%) for respondents >3 years, and the majority of respondents did not have degenerative diseases as many as 34 (67%).

Table 3

Attitude of Fulfilling the Spiritual Needs of the Elderly Towards Death (n=51)

Variable	Criterion	f	%
Attitude of fulfilling the spiritual needs of the elderly before death	Fulfilled	0	0
	Quite fulfilled	50	98
	Under-fulfilled	1	2
	Total	51	100

Table 3. It shows that the majority of respondents are quite satisfied with spiritual needs before death, namely (98%).

Table 4

Attitude of Fulfilling Spiritual Needs (Meaning, Purpose and Life Expectancy) in the Elderly Near Death n=51)

Variable	Criterion	f	%
Meaning, purpose and life expectancy	Fulfilled	2	4
	Quite fulfilled	47	92
	Under-fulfilled	2	4
	Total	51	100

Table 4. The results showed that the respondents were sufficiently fulfilled in spiritual needs (meaning, goals and life expectancy) before death (92%).

Table 5.

Attitude of Fulfilling Spiritual Needs (Relationship with God) in the Elderly Near Death (n=51)

Variable	Criterion	f	%
Relationship with God	Fulfilled	4	8
	Quite fulfilled	46	90
	Under-fulfilled	1	2
	Total	51	100

Table 5. The results of the respondents were quite satisfied with their spiritual needs (relationship with God) before death, which was (90%).

Table 6.  
Attitude of Fulfilling Spiritual Needs (Spiritual Practice) in the Elderly Near Death (n=51)

Variable	Criterion	f	%
Spiritual practice	Fulfilled	0	0
	Quite fulfilled	17	33
	Under-fulfilled	34	76
Total		51	100

Table 6. The results of respondents were less satisfied with spiritual needs (spiritual practices) before death, namely (67%).

### Age

The results of the study showed that the age of respondents at PPSLU Cepiring was based on the median value, which was 68 years old, with the youngest age being 53 years old and the oldest being 101 years old. Elderly people who have reached the age of 60 years and above will experience physiological and morphological changes, one of which is in the musculoskeletal system, especially in the muscles. The physiological changes that occur are a decrease in muscle mass and muscle strength (Putri et al., 2020). In old age or late adulthood, a number of physical changes are increasingly visible as a result of the aging process. Among the most noticeable physical changes in old age are seen in changes such as hair becoming sparse and gray, skin drying out and wrinkling, teeth missing and gums shrinking, facial configuration changing, spine becoming hunched. Physical strength decreases, bones become fragile, easily broken so that they will have difficulty in doing activities, one of which is standing and walking (Nadia, 2020). Based on the results of the study, previous research and existing theories, researchers argue that the majority of the elderly are 68 years old. With age, the elderly experience a decline in body function and degenerative diseases such as heart, diabetes mellitus, stroke, rheumatism and hypertension. This physiological is naturally experienced by human sports, especially the elderly themselves.

### Gender

The results of the study showed that the respondents at PPSLU Cepiring (57%) were female and (43%) were male. Thus, gender differences affect the physical activity of the elderly, the amount of muscle mass and fat distribution in men is less than in women because in men the hormone testosterone works more so that it affects the synthesis of proteins that are useful for muscle mass, muscle mass affects muscle strength to maintain and improve dynamic balance (Yuliadarwati, 2020).

### Length of Stay

The results showed that (59%) respondents had lived for >3 years. This research is in line with (Ngadiran Antonis, 2019), the elderly who have lived in the orphanage for a long time are easy to adapt to the orphanage environment and the older the elderly, the older the elderly experience anxiety in facing their lives, especially those living in nursing homes. This is due to the declining body function due to aging and is often accompanied by degenerative diseases that occur. One of the health care that needs to be provided to the elderly is the psychological factor, namely by providing peace of mind through increased worship such as dhikr in order to improve the quality of life of the elderly (Burhanuddin, 2020). Based on the results of the study, previous research and existing theories, researchers argue that the length of stay of the elderly in the orphanage is influenced by anxiety factors in the face of death and degenerative diseases suffered. These

problems can be solved by achieving peace of mind for the elderly in facing death through religious activities, socialization, and self-approach to God.

### **Degenerative Diseases**

The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents in PPSLU Cepiring did not have degenerative diseases (67%) and (33%) had degenerative diseases. One of the degenerative diseases that many respondents suffer from in the orphanage is hypertension. Moeni (2016 in Trilia 2021) Diseases related to spiritual health that can threaten and inhibit the spiritual development of the elderly, one of which is hypertension. In line with research conducted by Adam Lusiana (2019), it is stated that the older you get, the greater the risk of hypertension. Hypertension can be caused by environmental factors, work, lack of exercise, psychological stress, gender and age. That way, spiritual support is needed to be able to accept one's illness. Based on the results of research, previous research and existing theories, researchers argue that degenerative diseases that are often experienced by the elderly are hypertension. Because basically the elderly are reluctant to maintain body health such as diet and activity patterns. That way, the elderly need to be given activities that bring themselves closer to God.

### **Attitude of Fulfilling the Spiritual Needs of the Elderly Towards Death**

The results of the study showed that the respondents at PPSLU Cepiring (98%) were quite satisfied with the attitude of fulfilling spiritual needs, as evidenced by the results of the questionnaire from three aspects, namely, often finding the meaning of the disease experienced, often finding peace of mind and often wanting to bring a religious figure from the orphanage. This research is in line with what was conducted by Frida (2021) who stated that the attitude of meeting the spiritual needs of the elderly, more religious activities, especially in terms of prayer or dhikr and wanting to bring in religious leaders from inside the orphanage. In addition, the fulfillment of the spiritual needs of the elderly can be realized by getting closer to God by asking for forgiveness from God to obtain forgiveness for the mistakes that have been made (Simbolon, 2022). In the advanced stages, the shadow of death often predominantly colors spiritual feelings. For some seniors, death is an uncertainty that causes fear. However, some elderly people have a sense of spiritual peace that allows them to face death without fear. Spirituality helps them find peace in themselves and their death (Asih, P., et al. 2020). Researchers argue that the elderly are able to meet spiritual needs to find meaning, purpose and life expectancy. If this has been fulfilled, the elderly are able to create a space where the elderly can pour out their thoughts and feelings, support each other and get a calm and comfortable environment. With the hope that the elderly can live quietly and peacefully.

### **Attitude of Fulfilling Spiritual Needs (Meaning, Purpose and Life Expectancy) in the Elderly Towards Death**

The results of the study showed that respondents at PPSLU Cepiring (92%) were quite satisfied with their spiritual needs (meaning, goals and life expectancy). Based on the questionnaire, the attitude of fulfilling spiritual needs (meaning, purpose and life expectancy) obtained by respondents often found the meaning of the illness experienced as many as 37 (73%) and respondents never expressed concern for their families as many as 6 (12%). This research is in line with Dewi et al. (2023) that spirituality is able to help the elderly in finding meaning, purpose, and personality values in their lives. This personality value is what makes life goals achievable. Concerns experienced by the elderly are very common in various environments. One of the worries of the elderly is the fear of death. If worry is left unchecked, it can cause fear, anxiety, feeling

insecure, loss of appetite and can cause irregular heartbeats (Baharuddin, 2023). According to Mundiharno (2010 in Kurniasih 2020), it is stated that apart from the spiritual aspect, the elderly also need support from their families, where this support can be achieved through the presence of verbal and non-verbal information, advice, assistance or behavior provided by the closest people in the form of presence and things that can provide emotional benefits to the recipient. Researchers argue that the elderly are able to find the meaning of the disease they experience. That's where the elderly need to be given psychosocial and emotional support in order to reduce anxiety and fear in the face of death, and be taught how to interact well with others (fellow elderly, family and so on).

### **Attitude of Fulfilling Spiritual Needs (Relationship with God) in the Elderly Towards Death**

The results of the study show that respondents at PPSLU Cepiring (90%) are quite satisfied with spiritual needs (relationship with God). Based on the questionnaire, the attitude of fulfilling spiritual needs (relationship with God) was obtained by respondents who often found peace of mind as many as 34 (67%) and respondents were never able to resolve disputes with family or friends as much as 1 (2%). The results of this study are in line with Sari (2023), which states that anxiety can eliminate happiness, hope and peace of mind. To reduce anxiety in the elderly, it is necessary to take spiritual improvement actions in approaching their death, such as dhikr which has the power of relaxation to bring peace of mind (Hidayati, 2023). Peace of mind can also be achieved if a person can remember the existence of His Lord by carrying out His commands such as worshipping, reading the holy book, and doing spiritual guidance to increase the potential or religious nature of each individual so that they can be directed (Burhanuddin, 2020). Researchers argue that the elderly need to have readiness to face death by increasing the fulfillment of spiritual needs through self-approach to God such as doing spiritual guidance and worship so that they have provisions for rewards when facing God, interacting with fellow elderly people or family so that the fear of death can be distracted.

### **Attitude of Fulfilling Spiritual Needs (Spiritual Practice) in the Elderly Towards Death**

The results of the study showed that respondents at PPSLU Cepiring (67%) were less met with spiritual needs (spiritual practices). Based on the questionnaire, the attitude of fulfilling spiritual needs (spiritual practices) obtained by respondents sometimes wanted to bring a religious figure from the orphanage as many as 41 (80%) and respondents never wanted to be brought spiritual books such as the Qur'an, the Bible, the Torah and the Bible as many as 37 (72%). According to Santoso and Samputra (2023), spiritual practice is a focused activity that aims to cultivate spiritual qualities that can result in a balanced and disciplined lifestyle. This research is in line with Frida (2021), that religious leaders play an important role in providing worship guidance to the elderly. Because religious figures are seen as figures who understand various personalities of religious law, both related to worship and muamalat. The position of religious leaders plays an important role, because they are considered people who have a higher level of religious knowledge compared to people in general and have behavior that should be used as an example in religious attitudes. With the presence of religious leaders, it is hoped that it can increase worship guidance activities for the elderly.

Researchers argue that the elderly can participate in religious activities, one of which is by participating in spiritual guidance activities 3 times a week, reading Surat Yasin and tahlil together every Friday. But the elderly do not want to be brought spiritual books such as the Qur'an, the Bible, the Torah and the Bible. However, from observations in the field, the low desire of the

elderly to read actively is influenced by internal factors (decreased visual function) and external factors (reading glasses) that have not been facilitated. That's where the role of caregivers is needed to facilitate and help the elderly get closer to God through religious activities, so that the elderly have good charitable provisions when they are about to die. From the results of the research on the aspects of meaning, purpose and life expectancy and aspects of the relationship with God, it was found that the respondents were quite satisfied with their spiritual needs, but in the aspect of spiritual practice, they received results that their spiritual needs were not met. This is because respondents in orphanages lack interest in carrying out spiritual activities due to the limitations of declining body functions such as decreased visual function, decreased hearing function, aging factors that are prone to limited movement, lack of assistance from caregivers and lack of facilitation of scriptures and prayer tools in each bedroom. This causes respondents to be reluctant to carry out religious activities in order to prepare for future death.

## **CONCLUSION**

The attitude of meeting the spiritual needs of the elderly before death is mostly quite fulfilled (98%). The attitude of fulfilling spiritual needs (meaning, goals and life expectancy) in the elderly before death is mostly quite fulfilled (92%). The attitude of fulfilling spiritual needs (relationship with God) in the elderly before death is mostly quite fulfilled (90%). The attitude of meeting spiritual needs (spiritual practice) in the elderly before death is mostly unmet (67%).

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