



# Dhikr and Qur'an Recitation Therapy: An Idea to Recover the Mental Health of Families of the Death Victims of Mount Marapi Eruption in West Sumatra, Indonesia

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#### Abstract

**Background:** Volcanic eruption is one of the most common disasters in Indonesia. One of the most fatal volcanic eruptions in Indonesia in 2023 was the eruption of Mount Marapi in West Sumatra. This caused a psychological impact on the survivors and families of the victims who died.

**Problem:** Psychological interventions are usually only provided to survivors. It is very rare to find psychosocial assistance provided to the families of victims who died, even though they also experience acute and prolonged mental health disorders, such as trauma and even depression. So, we offer the idea of remembrance therapy and reading the Qur'an to restore the mental health of the families of the deceased victims.

**Conclusion:** Dhikr and Qur'an recitation therapy fosters sincerity, patience, and self-acceptance so as to restore mental health in the families of the victims of the Mount Marapi eruption. The therapy serves as a calming factor for the soul because it contains various wisdoms for the calamities experienced. The whole series of therapy is closed with prayer as a form of surrendering the soul to God.

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Dear Editor,

We are writing this correspondence in response to various articles published on disaster mitigation around the world, particularly the article entitled “Non-Pharmacological Cooking Therapy: An Idea for Recovering the Mental Health of Adolescents as Disaster Victims of Mount Merapi Natural Eruption in Yogyakarta (Indonesia)”.<sup>1</sup> This article is very interesting by offering the idea of cooking therapy to improve the mental health of adolescent disaster victims of the eruption of Mount Merapi in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2023. In the article, the perspective of psychological intervention is aimed at survivors who need mental health recovery. In this review, we try to discuss and offer the idea of psychological intervention to the families of victims who died due to the eruption of Mount Marapi in West Sumatra, Indonesia. The eruption of Mount Marapi in West Sumatra on December 3, 2023 was the worst eruption in the history of the mountain with the death toll of 24 climbers, the majority of whom were students. This is noteworthy because during the eruption, some of the climbers who died had sent short videos asking for help to their families with injuries, weakness, and the whole body filled with volcanic ash. This situation caused deep grief, especially for the closest family of the victims, particularly the father and mother. The deep grief experienced by the victim's family causes sadness, anxiety, trauma, and even depression, which has an impact on low mental health.<sup>2,3</sup> Therefore, they need psychological help to recover their mental health from such deep grief.

In the context of the West Sumatra region, the domicile of the victim's family is predominantly Muslim. So, we offer zikr therapy and reading the Qur'an as one of the psychological intervention methods. We recommend this because based on local culture when a community member dies, the *Tablil* tradition is held. *Tablil* is an Indonesian religious tradition of visiting neighbors and family members of the deceased for three

consecutive days by saying dhikr and reading the Qur'an and praying for the deceased and the family to be given fortitude.<sup>4</sup> So that in the psychosocial context, it is integrated with dhikr therapy and reading the Qur'an which can be provided by Islamic counsellors. Dhikr therapy begins with purifying oneself with ablution, then proceeds to recite the sentences "Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, Allahu Akbar, and Laa Ilaaha Illallah" which means that the disaster experienced by the family due to the death of a child is a decree from Allah and death in the world towards Allah's love in the afterlife. Through dhikr therapy, it is hoped that it can reduce various mental health disorders experienced by families so as to create peace of mind.<sup>5</sup> Dhikr therapy can also be combined with

recitation of the Qur'an so that it can reduce depression, anxiety, and stress due to deep grief so that it can directly improve the mental health of the victim's family.<sup>6,7</sup>

Dhikr therapy carried out by the victim's family with Islamic counsellors will foster sincerity, patience, and self-acceptance of the disaster experienced. In addition, the therapy of reading and listening to the Qur'an serves as a reassurance for the soul, which contains various meanings, wisdom, and good guidance related to the death of family members due to the eruption of Mount Merapi. Finally, the entire series of remembrance therapy and reading the Qur'an is closed by reading a prayer to God so that all the good deeds of the victims are accepted and forgiven for all the sins they have committed.

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