

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

An experimental study on the impact of holy Qur'an recitation in reducing anxiety among preoperative patients in IndonesiaTatag Dwi Saputro¹✉, Eka Sakti Wahyuningtyas², Sodiq Kamal³**Submitted**
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doi <https://doi.org/10.31603/ihs.12506>**Abstract**

Preoperative care begins upon the patient's arrival in the operating room and continues until their transfer to the operating table. This stage is often associated with heightened anxiety among patients. Despite the prevalence of this issue, limited research has been conducted to evaluate the effect of Holy Qur'an recitation in alleviating preoperative anxiety. This study aimed to determine the effect of listening to Qur'an recitation (Murattal) on anxiety levels in preoperative patients in the Surgical Ward. A quasi-experimental design was employed, incorporating a pre-test and post-test with a control group design. The sample consisted of 32 respondents selected through non-probability purposive sampling. The intervention involved a single 15-minute session of listening to the recitation of Surah Al-Mulk via MP3 headphones, followed by a post-test evaluation. Statistical analyses included the Shapiro-Wilk test, homogeneity test, paired sample t-test, and independent sample t-test, with a significance threshold set at $p < 0.05$. The findings demonstrated a significant reduction in anxiety levels among preoperative patients following the Murattal Qur'an therapy. This suggests that Murattal therapy is an effective method for reducing anxiety and may serve as an alternative or complementary approach to managing anxiety among preoperative patients.

Keywords: Anxiety, health innovation, healthcare provider, holy Qur'an, preoperative stage**Introduction**

The smooth execution of a surgical procedure relies significantly on the preparatory stage, which lays the groundwork for all subsequent phases (Webb & Peacock, 1980; Naumann, 2021). Any errors during this critical phase can have severe repercussions, particularly for patients undergoing surgery for the first time (Marsh et al., 2022). These individuals often exhibit heightened emotional responses due to unfamiliarity with the process. Psychological readiness, therefore, plays a vital role in influencing the patient's physical condition and overall outcomes (Powell et al., 2016). Comprehensive preparation has been shown to alleviate anxiety, fear, critical factors that affect preoperative patients. Anxiety and fear can manifest physically in various ways, including increased heart rate, rapid breathing, involuntary movements, sweaty hands, repeated questioning, and frequent urination (Adhikari et al., 2023). Addressing these issues is essential for ensuring a smooth surgical experience and better recovery (Kok et al., 2023). Anxiety, at its core, is an emotional response characterized by an undefined fear coupled with feelings of uncertainty, helplessness, isolation, and insecurity (Chand & Marwaha, 2023). Unlike fear, which has a specific object or source, anxiety is often triggered by the unknown and frequently accompanies new experiences (Mofatteh, 2020). For surgical patients, anxiety is commonly associated with concerns over the unfamiliar procedures they must undergo and the inherent risks posed by anesthesia and surgery (Friedrich et al., 2022). The worldwide prevalence of pre-operative anxiety is estimated to range from 60% to 92% (Dhungana, 2019). Symptoms of anxiety among these patients often include irritability, difficulty sleeping, restlessness, lethargy, crying spells, and disrupted sleep patterns (Sveinsdóttir et al., 2020). These manifestations can complicate the preoperative process, making it essential for healthcare professionals to address anxiety proactively to improve patient outcomes.

Nurses, as dedicated healthcare professionals, play a pivotal role in providing holistic care to patients such as physical, psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual dimensions (Ambushe et al., 2023). Nursing care is inherently patient-centered to recognizing the unique responses of individuals' health crises or changes. Integrating spiritual care into nursing practice is particularly relevant in addressing preoperative anxiety (Durmuş & Ekinci, 2022). Studies highlight the

efficacy of incorporating spiritual elements, such as the recitation of the Holy Qur'an in alleviating anxiety and enhancing patient well-being (Asrul, 2023; Dianti & Indrawijaya, 2021; Hardianto, 2019). Another research has shown that listening to the Qur'an significantly reduced pain intensity in post-CABG patients and shortened their hospital stays (Aburuz et al., 2023). Additionally, a study combining Qur'an recitation with interdialytic endurance-resistance training demonstrated notable improvements in physical condition, quality of life, and a substantial reduction in anxiety among patients undergoing hemodialysis (Frih et al., 2017) (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1. Illustration of reading holy Qur'an (Courtesy of www.unsplash.com).

At the Dahlia 3 Ward of RSUD Tidar in Magelang, the surgical ward has experienced a steady trend in surgeries over the past three months (August to October 2023). Hospital records indicate a total of 280 surgeries, averaging 90 procedures per month under local, spinal, or general anesthesia. A preliminary study conducted by the researcher in this ward revealed a significant prevalence of preoperative anxiety among patients. Interviews with ward nurses indicated that 9 out of 13 patients exhibited signs of anxiety, with one patient even postponing their surgery due to extreme fear. Further interviews with 15 patients identified common concerns, including fears about undergoing surgery, anesthesia, postoperative pain, and the possibility of surgical failure. These findings underscore the urgent need for effective interventions (holy Qur'an recitation) to address preoperative anxiety. Despite the growing body of research demonstrating the efficacy of incorporating spiritual elements, such as the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, in alleviating anxiety and enhancing patient well-being, there remains a notable gap in the application of these interventions within specific healthcare settings, particularly in preoperative contexts. While studies like those by Asrul (2023), Dianti & Indrawijaya (2021), and Hardianto (2019) provide compelling evidence of the positive effects of Qur'anic recitation on anxiety reduction, they often focus on broader patient populations or specific medical conditions. The lack of targeted research addressing the unique needs of preoperative patients in general surgery settings, such as those at RSUD Tidar Magelang, highlights an opportunity to explore how these spiritual interventions can be effectively integrated into preoperative care

protocols. Furthermore, existing studies, such as the one by Aburuz et al. (2023), which demonstrated significant reductions in pain intensity and shortened hospital stays among post-CABG patients through Qur'anic listening, suggest that the benefits of spiritual interventions extend beyond anxiety relief. However, there is limited exploration of how these practices can be tailored to address the multifaceted challenges faced by preoperative patients specifically. Preoperative anxiety is a prevalent issue that can adversely affect surgical outcomes, recovery times, and overall patient satisfaction. This gap underscores the need for research that focuses on the integration of Qur'anic recitation and relaxation techniques within the preoperative care framework at RSUD Tidar Magelang, where such interventions could potentially enhance patient outcomes. The rationale for implementing Holy Qur'an interventions in RSUD Tidar Magelang is further supported by the unique cultural and spiritual context of the region. Indonesia has a predominantly Muslim population, and spiritual practices are integral to the lives of many individuals. Incorporating Qur'anic recitation into preoperative care can align medical practices with the spiritual beliefs of their patients. This alignment respects the cultural values of patients and enhances their comfort and trust in the healthcare system. Given the evidence from studies that demonstrate the positive impact of spiritual interventions on anxiety and overall well-being, the integration of Qur'anic recitation and relaxation techniques in preoperative settings at RSUD Tidar Magelang could serve as a valuable strategy to improve patient outcomes and satisfaction, ultimately contributing to a more compassionate and effective healthcare experience.

Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with two groups to evaluate the impact of Holy Quran recitation on anxiety levels in preoperative patients. The research was conducted at RSUD Tidar Magelang from March to June 2024, focusing on a population of 280 patients scheduled for surgical treatments. A set of inclusion criteria was established to ensure the appropriateness of participants: only Muslim patients who were conscious, experienced mild to severe anxiety levels, had no hearing impairments, and were willing to provide written consent were included. Conversely, the exclusion criteria encompassed non-Muslim patients, unconscious preoperative patients, and those unwilling to participate. The sample size was determined using the Federer formula, which resulted in 16 patients being selected as representative of the study population. Given that the study involved both an intervention group and a control group, a total sample size of 32 participants was utilized. The methodology of the study involved assessing all eligible patients to determine their baseline anxiety levels using the Amsterdam Preoperative Anxiety and Information Scale (APAIS) questionnaire, a validated and reliable instrument. After identifying participants who met the inclusion criteria, they were divided into two groups: the treatment group, which received Murattal Al Quran therapy, and the control group, which did not receive any intervention. Both groups underwent a pre-test assessment to gauge their anxiety levels prior to the intervention (**Figure 2**).

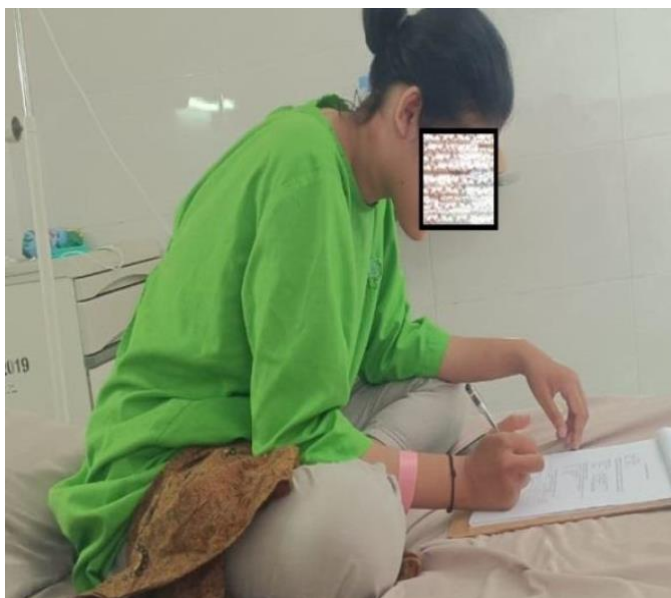


Figure 2. Data collection process.



Figure 3. Evaluation process.

Following this assessment, the intervention group received one session of Murattal Al Quran therapy, which lasted approximately 15 minutes. During this session, participants listened to Surah Al Mulk through an MP3 player and

headphones, allowing for an immersive experience aimed at reducing anxiety. After the intervention, a post-test assessment was conducted for both groups to evaluate any changes in anxiety levels (**Figure 3**). The data collection process was meticulously carried out by the lead researchers, in collaboration with trained assistants to ensure that the methodology was consistently applied across all participants. The analysis aimed to determine the effect of Murattal Al Quran therapy on preoperative anxiety by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of the intervention group. Descriptive statistics, normality testing, and independent sample t-tests were employed to assess the differences between the two groups and provide a comprehensive understanding of the therapy's effectiveness. Before the study commenced, ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of RSUD Tidar Magelang to confirm that all research protocols adhered to ethical standards (No. 064/EC-RSUDTIDAR/V/2024). This approval underscores the commitment to conducting research that respects the rights and welfare of participants.

Results

The table presented that the age characteristics in the intervention group were predominantly in the elderly category, with 8 respondents (50%). While in the control group, the majority were also in the elderly category, totaling 10 respondents (62.5%). Regarding gender characteristics, the intervention group had a higher number of male respondents, totaling 9 (56.2%). The control group had an equal number of female respondents, also totaling 9 (56.2%). Furthermore, in terms of educational background, the intervention group predominantly comprised respondents with a high school education, totaling 9 (56.3%). The control group also had the highest number of respondents with a high school education, totaling 8 (50%) (**Table 1**). The table presented that the anxiety characteristics in the intervention group before receiving Murattal Al Quran therapy were predominantly in the moderate anxiety category, with 8 respondents (50%). In the mild anxiety category, there was 1 patient (6.2%), and in the severe anxiety category, there were 7 respondents (43.8%). After receiving the Murattal Al Quran therapy, the majority of respondents fell into the mild anxiety category, totaling 8 respondents (50%), followed by the moderate anxiety category with 7 respondents (43.8%), and the severe anxiety category with 1 respondent (6.2%). In the control group, the initial measurement showed that the majority of respondents were in the moderate anxiety category, totaling 11 respondents (68.8%). For the mild anxiety category, there was 1 respondent (6.2%), and in the severe anxiety category, there were 4 respondents (25%). In the final measurement, the majority remained in the moderate anxiety category, totaling 10 respondents (62.4%), while the severe anxiety category had 3 respondents (18.8%), and the mild anxiety category also had 3 respondents (18.8%) (**Table 2**). Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that there was no difference in anxiety levels before the intervention between the intervention group and the control group ($p>0.05$). Furthermore, after the intervention, a significant difference in anxiety levels was observed between the intervention group and the control group ($p<0.05$). The average scores further indicated that the anxiety levels in the intervention group were significantly lower than those in the control group. This reduction suggests that the Murattal Al Quran therapy had a positive impact on alleviating anxiety among the participants. The findings highlight the effectiveness of integrating spiritual practices into preoperative care (**Table 3**).

Table 1. Profile of the participants.

Variables	Intervention group		Control group	
	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Age				
Teenagers (17-25)	1	6.3	3	18.8
Adults (26-45)	7	43.8	3	18.8
Elderly (46-65)	8	50	10	62.5
Sex				
Female	7	43.8	9	56.2
Male	9	56.2	7	43.8
Education				
Elementary School	1	6.3	4	25
Junior High School	3	18.8	1	6.3
Senior High School	9	56.3	8	50
Higher Education	3	18.8	3	18.8

Table 2. Assessment of anxiety.

Variables	Anxiety Categories	Intervention group		Control group	
		n	Percentage (%)	n	Percentage (%)
Anxiety (pre-surgery)	None	0	0	0	0
	Mild	1	6.2	1	6.2
	Moderate	8	50.0	11	68.8
	Severe	7	43.8	4	25
Anxiety (post surgery)	None	0	0	0	0
	Mild	8	50.0	3	18.8
	Moderate	7	43.8	10	62.4
	Severe	1	6.2	3	18.8

Table 3. Outcomes analysis.

Variables	Groups	Mean	p
Anxiety (Pre Intervention)	Intervention	18.06	0.346
	Control	16.81	
Anxiety (Post Intervention)	Intervention	12.69	0.012
	Control	15.88	

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that there is an effect of Murattal Al-Qur'an therapy on reducing preoperative anxiety levels after listening to Surah Al-Mulk through headphones for 15 minutes. These results were further corroborated by an independent t-test, which showed a significant difference in anxiety levels after the intervention between the intervention group and the control group. The average anxiety level in the intervention group was notably lower than in the control group. This study aligns with previous research confirming the significant effect of Murattal Al-Qur'an therapy on preoperative anxiety levels (Riyadi et al., 2023). Additionally, A study indicated a substantial impact of Murattal therapy on reducing anxiety in preoperative patients (Syamdarniati, 2023). Anxiety is a condition in which individuals feel worried, anxious, or even fearful of potential negative outcomes. It commonly affects patients prior to surgery, often related to unfamiliar medical procedures or the inherent risks of surgical and anesthetic interventions (Pokharel et al., 2011). Murattal refers to the recitation of the Qur'an with a melodious voice adhering to tajweed rules. Murattal recordings are used for therapeutic purposes in clinical settings (Priyanto & Anggraeni, 2019). In this study, the authors used Surah Al-Mulk, particularly verse 20, which emphasizes the boundless mercy of Allah extended to all creatures in the universe. Listening to Murattal Al-Mulk fosters a sense of peace and surrender to Allah's will. This surrender entails accepting fate with an open heart, thereby reducing the anxiety often caused by uncertainties about the future. Murattal Al-Qur'an, with its intonation and meaningful verses, has a positive effect on the human body, particularly in reducing anxiety (Riviati & Indra, 2024). The slow tempo of Murattal produces sound vibrations that stimulate the auditory system and activate the limbic system, evoking feelings of comfort. Auditory stimulation through Murattal Al-Qur'an also creates a distraction effect, increasing the production of endorphins while reducing stress hormones like cortisol (Moulaei et al., 2023). This process facilitates relaxation, diverts attention from anxiety, and enhances the body's chemical systems, lowering blood pressure, heart rate, and brainwave activity (Asrul, 2023). Listening to Murattal enables patients to feel closer to God, helping them to reflect and surrender their concerns to Him. This attitude of surrender promotes relaxation and tranquility in patients before undergoing surgery. Murattal Al-Qur'an alleviates physical symptoms of anxiety and addresses spiritual well-being. Listening to the Qur'an cultivate a profound connection with God and foster a sense of peace. This spiritual connection offers much-needed mental calmness for those experiencing anxiety. Individuals with strong spiritual health tend to live more content and fulfilling lives by clear purpose and satisfaction with achievements (Božek et al., 2020).

Nurses are essential in facilitating the incorporation of Holy Quran therapy for patients experiencing anxiety prior to surgery. Creating a calming and supportive environment can facilitate a healing atmosphere that incorporates spiritual

care into the overall treatment plan (Hesselink et al., 2020). This approach addresses the physical aspects of patient care and recognizes the importance of spiritual health. Incorporating Quranic recitation into the preoperative routine can help patients transition from a state of anxiety to one of tranquility (Rababa & Al-Sabbah, 2023). This holistic approach aligns with the growing recognition of the need for comprehensive care that addresses the mind, body, and spirit (Thornton, 2019). In practice, nurses can facilitate the recitation of verses from the Quran and guide patients in mindfulness and reflection. This process allows patients to engage in a meditative state, which has been shown to reduce anxiety levels significantly (Chen et al., 2012). Encouraging patients to focus on the soothing words of the Quran can help them cultivate a sense of inner peace and resilience (Ahmad & Musa, 2023). Furthermore, active listening is a crucial component of this therapeutic approach, as it enables nurses to understand and address patients' concerns, fears, and emotional needs. Establishing a trusting relationship can create a safe space where patients feel comfortable expressing their anxieties in the lead-up to surgery (Lerch et al., 2024). Additionally, education serves a crucial function in the successful implementation of Quranic recitation as a therapeutic intervention. Nurses can inform patients about the psychological and emotional benefits associated with Quranic recitation and emphasize its potential to alleviate anxiety (Moulaei et al., 2023). Encouraging participation in this spiritual practice empowers patients to take an active role in their preoperative care (Özcan et al., 2023). This empowerment can lead to improved emotional well-being and a more positive surgical outcome, as patients are likely to experience less anxiety and a smoother recovery. Integrating Holy Quran therapy into their practice enhances the patient experience and contributes to a more compassionate and holistic approach to healthcare (Figure 4).

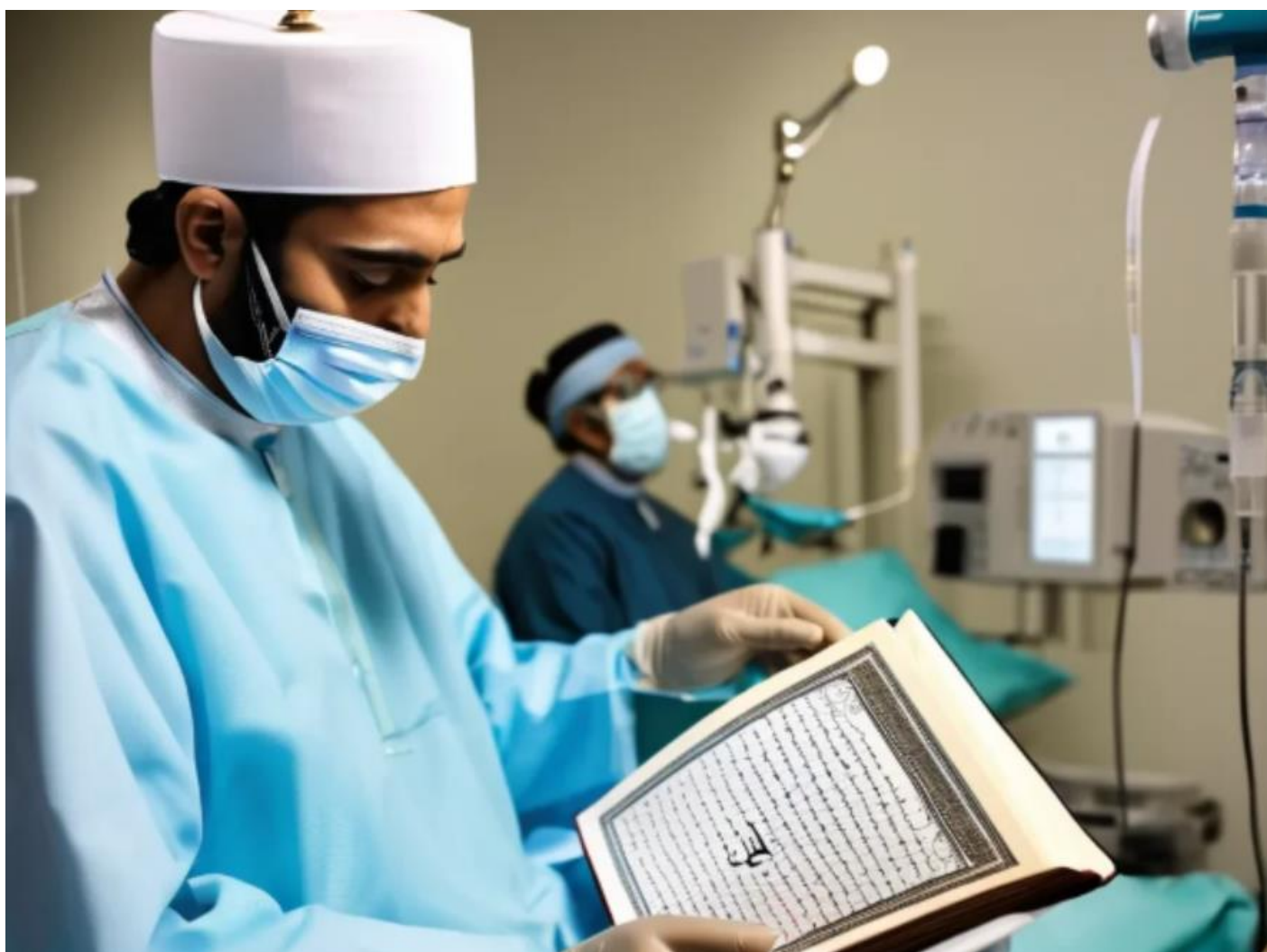


Figure 4. Illustration of ready holy Quran prior to surgery (Courtesy of www.pixl.com).

In this study, the researchers encountered several weaknesses and limitations that could potentially impact the findings related to the reduction of patient anxiety. One of the primary challenges was the inability to control for confounding factors that may influence the outcomes. For instance, various medications prescribed to patients prior to surgery can have significant effects on anxiety levels, either by alleviating symptoms or, conversely, by inducing side effects that may increase anxiety. The variability in patient characteristics, such as age, gender, previous surgical experiences, and individual coping mechanisms, also holds significant importance in how patients respond to anxiety-reducing interventions. These personal factors can create a diverse range of responses to the Holy Quran recitation therapy, making it difficult to ascertain the true impact of the intervention on anxiety levels. Moreover, the study's design did not allow for a focused examination of specific diagnoses or surgical procedures. This broad approach can dilute the findings, as different surgical interventions may evoke varying levels of anxiety. For example, patients undergoing major surgeries may experience higher anxiety compared to those undergoing minor procedures, and the reasons for their anxiety may differ significantly. The study may overlook the nuances of how specific medical contexts influence patient anxiety and the effectiveness of spiritual interventions. This lack of specificity could limit the applicability of the findings to particular patient groups or surgical contexts. Furthermore, it may lead to a challenge to draw definitive conclusions about the efficacy of Holy Quran recitation therapy across diverse scenarios. Additionally, the researchers faced logistical challenges in implementing the intervention consistently across all participants. Variations in the environment, such as noise levels in the hospital, the presence of family members, and the overall atmosphere, can affect a patient's ability to engage with and benefit from the Quranic recitation. These external factors, combined with the internal psychological state of the patients, may further complicate the assessment of the intervention's effectiveness. Through this action, researchers can provide more targeted recommendations for integrating spiritual therapies into preoperative care to improve outcomes and experiences (**Figure 5**).



Figure 5. Illustration of operation room (Courtesy of www.pexels.com).

Conclusion

The experimental study on the impact of Holy Qur'an recitation in reducing anxiety among preoperative patients in Indonesia highlights the potential of spiritual interventions as effective complementary therapies in healthcare settings. The findings suggest that integrating Qur'anic recitation into preoperative care can significantly alleviate anxiety levels, thereby enhancing patient comfort and overall surgical experiences. Future research should aim to expand on these findings by exploring the long-term effects of such interventions on postoperative recovery, patient satisfaction, and overall health outcomes. Additionally, studies could investigate the mechanisms through which Qur'anic recitation exerts its calming effects, as well as the feasibility of implementing these practices in diverse healthcare environments. It would also be beneficial to include a broader demographic to assess the impact across various cultural and religious backgrounds. Finally, continuing to explore the intersection of spirituality and healthcare can contribute to the development of holistic treatment approaches that honor patients' beliefs.

Author declaration

The first author was responsible for obtaining ethical clearance, conducting a comprehensive literature review, executing the research, and overseeing the manuscript writing process. The second and third authors significantly contributed to the manuscript's development by collaborating on the organization and systematic structure of the writing.

AI statements

The authors declare that they did not employ artificial intelligence during manuscript writing.

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Availability of data and materials

All data are available from the authors.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

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Authors' perspective

Innovation points

- The study explores the use of Holy Qur'an recitation as a non-pharmacological approach to anxiety reduction.
- The focus highlighted the relevance of addressing anxiety during the critical pre-surgical period.
- The study employs an experimental methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the Islamic intervention.

Potential areas of interest

- What measurable impact does Holy Qur'an recitation have on the anxiety levels of preoperative patients compared to other relaxation techniques or standard care?
- How does the cultural and spiritual significance of Qur'an recitation influence its effectiveness as an anxiety-reducing intervention among patients in Indonesia?
- What experimental methods and tools are used to assess the changes in anxiety levels pre- and post-intervention in this study?

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