ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HALTH SCIENCE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

MENTAL ILLNESS PERSPECTIVES AND HEALING PRACTICES AMONG MUSLIM HEALERS: ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

By; **EKRAM TEMKIN**

A THESIS PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES, ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS MASTER'S DEGREE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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BY: EKRAM TEMKIN

ADVISORS:

DR ENIGDA GIRMA (MD, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY)

EMAIL: - engida3@yahoo.com

MS. FIKIR GETANEH

EMAIL: -fiker.getaneh@aau.edu

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Summary

Background: perception and treatment approaches toward mental illness differ across cultures, with traditional and religious healing practices playing a significant role in many communities. In Muslim societies religious healing practices influence how mental illness is perceived, diagnosed and managed. Despite their extensive use and huge influence, the perspectives of Muslim healers toward mental illness and religious healing practices remain unexplored.

Objectives: the study aims to explore how Muslim healers understand and perceive mental illness. Specifically; the study aims to investigate the diagnostic and treatment approaches used by Muslim healers.

Methods: a generic qualitative research method was used to explore the perception of Muslim healers regarding mental illness. Eight participants were recruited using purposive a snowballing sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and then transcribed verbatim, translated into English. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes

Results: from the data obtained five core themes emerged, includingunderstanding and conceptualization of mental and spiritual illness, beliefs about the causes of mental and spiritual illness, assessment practices to identify illness, healing approaches and methods, and collaboration between health care practitioners. Finding highlights the centrality of spiritual beliefs in healers understanding and treating mental illness, despite some openness to psychological explanations, spiritual methods were preferred.

Conclusion: the study highlights the significant role of Muslim healers in mental health care and indicates the need for culturally sensitive collaboration between spiritual and biomedical /psychological system to improve access and outcomes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

A mental disorder/Illness is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning (1).A person's understanding and perception of mental illness might differ from one community to the other ((2). different perspectives may influence their treatment seeking behaviors.

According to WHO it is estimated that in Ethiopia probably 90% of population uses traditional healing practices one of them being spiritual/religious therapy ((3) they first prefer religious help because of various reasons like money related issues, low mental health understanding, low mental health institutions, in relation to other interpreted causes of mental illness like witchcraft, evil eye and possessions ((4).

According to a study done in 2014, over the past thirty years American psychiatry attitude has changed regarding religion and spirituality in a more positive approach ((5)Religion has various means in Which a person uses to adjust to the negative impacts of challenging circumstances through enhancing pleasant sensations. It gives a sense of hope and motive in embracing life for people with strong faith ((6). Religion also helps people to cope with stressful situations by changing the way they perceive problems and hardship, making challenges feel more meaningful or a test of faith.it also increases people's confidence in handling problems leading to greater emotional strength and resilience (7).

There is both negative and positive relationship between mental health and spirituality or religion which are used as a coping mechanism by patients with mental illness with different perspectives (8)Self-empowerment, inner growth, and enhanced confidence are found to be positively related to positive religious coping mechanisms like shared spiritual enduring, optimistic faith view, looking faith-based guidance etc., and negative coping mechanisms like individuals with a belief of divine punishment, associate their condition with evil work encounter depression, anxiety and distress (9,10).

In Islam as in other religion various practices are used to alleviate and cope with negative emotions, daily stress and challenges, among them are ablution(wudu), salah(prayer), dhikr(remembering Allah), reciting Quran, making supplications(dua),istigfar (seeking forgiveness) and fasting(11).

Different religions have various explanation of mental illness. Particularly in Islam mental illness has been explained in various teachings particularly through Quran and hadith. According to Islamic teaching supernatural entities, evil eyes and witchcraft are believed to control humans and influence their behavior leading them to be ill(12). In Ethiopia there are few studies which address mental health literacy, mental illness perspective and treatment approaches among traditional healers from different cultures in general however to the researcher's knowledge there remains a research gap in understanding the perspectives and practices of Muslim faith healers regarding Mental illness.

1.2 Statement of problem

traditional treatment providers implement techniques even though they have inadequate understanding on initial medical treatment, and this may lead to several health consequences, in Ethiopia where there is lack of mental health resources and professionals traditional healing practices including religious healings are the first preferred treatment by individuals(3).

According to 2019 study there are 34% Muslim populations in Ethiopia(13).among them are Muslim faith healers. Muslim healers do play an important role regarding mental health issues and are the first line choice by individuals for treatment(14). Despite their huge significance, there is only few information about how Muslim healers, conceptualize, diagnose and treat mental illness. This study aims to address the gap by providing empirical data on the understanding and perspective of mental illness by Muslim healers. This study will offer a more comprehensive understanding of how mental illness is addressed within Islamic healing setting by examining healers approaches.

1.3 Significance of the study

The study can help in providing a detailed understanding of Muslim healer's approach to mental health including their methods of diagnosis and treatment. The researcher hope that the result of the study will highlight the role of religious healing practices in mental health creating insight into how it acknowledges or challenges modern mental health care.

The study will also shed a light in understanding the relationship between faith and mental health which may reduce stigma by normalizing discussion about mental illness within religious context.

Although there are studies regarding traditional healing and mental health generally studies focusing specifically on Muslim healers and their approaches to mental health are rare. By focusing on the perspectives of Muslim healers, this research will fill a significant gap in the literature related to mental illness within Islamic healing traditions, particularly in Ethiopia.

Also, the research will help to advocate clinicians and policy makers develop more culturally sensitive and holistic approaches to mental health care.

1.4 Literature review

1.4.1 Conceptualization of mental illness in Islam

Mental health is Islam is understood as a complete life pattern in a more holistic view of an individual's life including their belief system, inner values, their dominant actions, feelings aspirations, mental capacity, emotional distress, and disputes ((15).`

Islam provides different type of coping mechanisms for individuals with difficulty, daily life hardships and negative moods which are reciting Qur'an, doing istigfar(forgiveness seeking,), zikr (remembrance of Allah) making Dua, prayer, fasting(16)

Any illness is believed to be caused by the qadr(will of Allah)(17).even though the ways differ from one another. Illness is perceived by Muslims as a way to connect to and remember ALLAH. However, it's expected that every individual should seek treatment for their health issue ((17).

One meaning of mental illness in Islam is that it happens when a person's strong desire and external influence get in conflict with Islamic teachings from the prophet and the Quran and he/she became detached and, doubtful of their faith ((15)

A person is prone to mental illness or psychological distress due lack of faith(e.g. To love someone/something more than ALLAH and spiritual emptiness accompanied with failure of remembrance of Allah (SW) (18).

Allah in the Qur'an stated that

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance – indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

(Qur'an 20: 124)

Also, different studies have discussed the notion of emotional and behavioral disturbance to be the unseen and supernatural world which include jinn, sihr(magic), hassad(envy), and ayin(evil eye). Additionally, some believe that mental illness is caused by punishments from God.

1.4.1.1 Jinn, sihr and evil eye

According to the Quran the jinn were crafted by the creator (Allah SW) from smokeless flame of fire.Jinn and human shares same characteristics such as understanding and the ability to think (19)they're also given the ability to choose between good and bad. Some jinn are believed to inflict bodily and mental damage by pushing people into insanity and causing death. These jinn are considered deceitful and controlling ((20)

Jinn may possess a person for various reasons such as the person having lack of faith, when a person accidentally walks over a jinn ((17), when the jinn is in love with the person (18).People who have been possessed by jinn might present with various symptoms like mood swings, excessive sadness, self-isolation, lack of sleep, unstoppable sobbing and laughter rigidity, seizures, change in their voice etc. ((18). These are similar to different psychiatric symptoms.

Sihr can be done for two reasons either to harm or benefit the person, however the ways used by the magician are actions that are against the religious principles(21)it is a practice done by using supernatural powers through summoning evils or satanic rituals to harm others (22). People who are believed to be affected by sihr suffer from low motivation, extreme restlessness, trouble sleeping, intense fear, feeling of helplessness and despair, also some hallucinatory experiences ((23), which are believed to be symptoms of mental illness in modern psychiatry.

Evil eye happens when a person enviously gazes toward another person causing harm and affliction. it is believed that evil eye is a result of satanic work in which the evil (Satan) misguided a person to get jealous or think evil toward another person ((24). Evil eye has been mentioned in the Quran and hadith confirming the existence," And(I seek refuge) from the evil of an envier when he envies" (Quran 113:5).

Also, Prophet Mohammed(pbuh) said that "The influence of an evil eye is a fact; if anything would precede the destiny it would be the influence of an evil eye".

(Sahih Muslim).

Muslim faith healers in south Africa believe that a person who is affected by evil eye manifest symptoms such as fatigue, disturbed sleep pattern, poor appetite and they may be faced with affliction and bad luck(25).

During the Islamic golden age mental disorders were perceive to be real condition which requires clinical evaluation and treatment. They were assessed using clinical judgment and observation instead of cultural believes in supernatural causes ((26). Some early Muslim scholars including IbnSina the founder of modern medicine attribute mental health problems to psychological and biological factors unlike current notions of spiritual perspectives (27).

1.4.2 Muslim healers' perspective and their diagnostic method

According to a study done in east London Bangladeshis Muslim faith healers who were Imams held the belief of both traditional and modern explanation of mental illness within their narratives. They attribute depression to a biomedical cause requiring psychiatric intervention however they acknowledge that conditions which are unresponsive to psychiatric intervention are attributed to jinn possessions compelling spiritual healing (28).

According to a study done in south Africa found that Muslim healers believe in the notion of the four essential components of human being the mind, body, self and the soul and their contribution to maintain a harmonious balance in humans' life, The disruption of this balance influenced by natural and supernatural factors causes sickness either physically, mental or spiritual(25).

Consistent with this finding According to a study done in Ghana it was found that most of the Muslim healers believe that people get mental problems as a result of possessions by supernatural entities when they fail to perform rituals that would protect them from these entities called jinn and also people might do evil to others through black magic out of envy that would result peculiar actions ((20).

Also, they agree that some symptoms like hallucinations and delusions, difficulty in logical reasoning, disturbances in sleep and eating might be caused naturally (biologically) additionally childhood trauma, excessive worry, low stress tolerance, biochemical imbalances in the brain were also perceived as the causes of initiation of mental illness(25)This finding is also supported by Siama Rashid et.al where faith healers believe that some psychosis symptoms are attributed to biomedical and psychological causes but as the same time supernatural causes were also inferred(29).

Substance misuse which is seen as a sin in Islamic religion is attributed to social factors such as peer pressures, bad childhood and separated family, the degree of faith a person has was also used as a cause for substance misuse ((29). This aligns with the modern formulation of substance misuse.

Muslim faith healers use various methods to diagnose a person. They make a thorough assessment from both the patient and family about the individual's condition ((20)They have their own ways of differentiating spiritual possessions from mental illness. The diagnosis is made through interpretation of dreams and recitation of the Ruqiya, the healer by observing some behavioral changes like vomiting, sobbing, shouting during the Ruqiya recitation, talking with sinister tone, a sudden flip in character decides the person is afflicted by jinn. some have difficulty differentiating the two (30)

This is consistent with Lily N.A.Kpobi and Leslie where Muslim healers use informal religious methods like Quran recitation as a diagnosis method by observing the behavioral change of the individual (20).

1.4.3 Ways of treatment

The holy Quran states that "There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also created its treatment" (Bukhari582).According to Muslim healers' faith in the almighty is essential in the treatment process.

Treatment is done using various methods particularly Ruqiya is the most common. Ruqiya is an Islamic treatment method that involves particular Qur'anic verse recitation and duasto seek protection from ALLAH(18) there are no specific teachings from the prophet Mohammed(pbuh) regarding Ruqiya to be used for only conditions such as jinn possessions, also there are no evidences that Ruqiya should be performed by certain group of people from particular professions.

Quran is recited both directly on the person and on other natural substances such as water, honey, black seed oil, olive oil which is to be ingested, used for a bath, application on the body ((18,25)It is clearly stated in the Quran, "We send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers" (17:82).During recitation of the Quran the healer places their right palm on the patient's head to detect their temperature and transform positive energy ((25,31). The Quran is also used in a written form on charms or amulets such as rings by Muslim healers to protect the person from possession and to exorcise the jinn (25). The use of this technique is controversial in Islamic teachings, some scholars believe that its normal and permissible but some suggested that it is prohibited (32).

A study done in Iraq found that Muslim healers at some point uses physical methods such as sticking, beating and extending to strangulation on individuals within treatment in order to exorcise the jinn.

Similarly, other studies also have a consistent finding that some religious healers use light to harsh physical techniques in order to cast out the jinn ((33)There is a believe that this method doesn't hurt the person rather the jinn possessing the person. This method has been highly prohibited my several Muslim scholars and is not scripted in either in the Quran and hadith.

According to a study done in Malaysia referral to hospitals are made by Muslim healers if they believe that the condition is due to psychological problem or/and if the condition doesn't progress (30).According to a study done in south Africa it was found that some Muslim healers prohibited their patients from taking psychiatric medications due to their side effect interfering with their religious treatment making it difficult to differentiate it from the symptoms, however there were also positive attitudes toward medication by some Muslim faith healers (30). Some believe that medical/psychological help would be beneficial because spiritual illness may manifest in emotional or physical symptoms (25)

Chapter Two

Research questions

1. How do Muslim healers conceptualize mental illness?
2. How do Muslim healers diagnose mental illness?
3. What healing practices do Muslim healers use for treating mental illness?

Chapter Three

Research objectives

3.1 General objectives

To explore and understand the perspectives of Muslim healers regarding mental illness.

3.2Specific objectives

- To examine the approaches to diagnosis used among Muslim healers in identifying mental illness
- To explore the understanding and conceptualization of mental illness among Muslim healers.
- To explore the treatment methods applied by Muslim healers while addressing mental health

Chapter Four

Methodologies

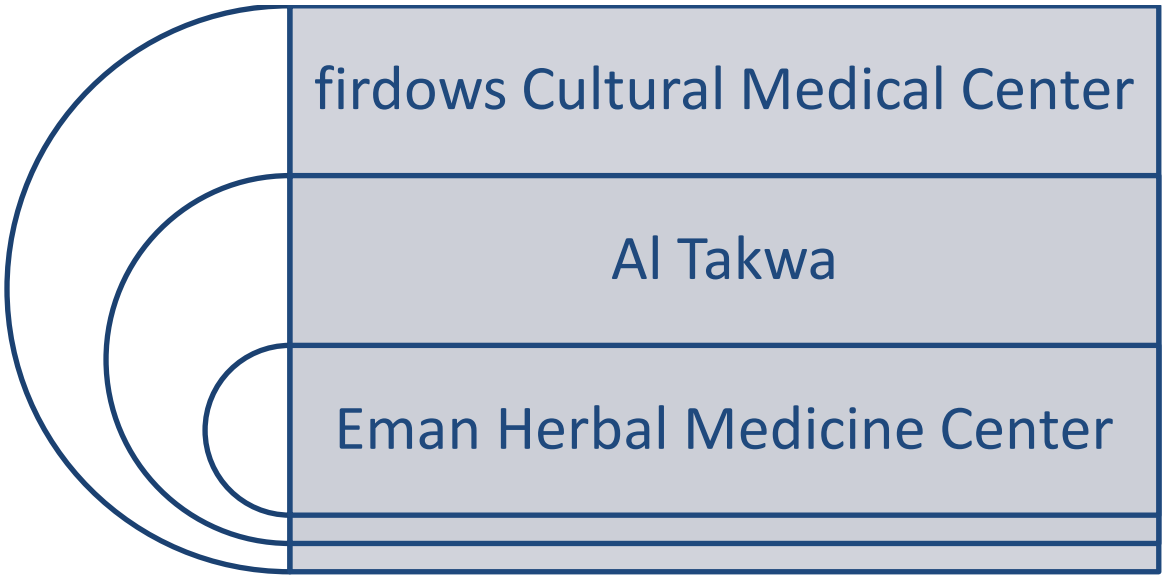
4.1 Study design

The study employed generic qualitative research approach, to explore perspectives of Muslim healers in relation to mental illness and its treatment, focusing on their experiences, beliefs and perceptions in a flexible manner.

4.2 Study setting

The research was conducted among Muslim faith healers in Addis Ababa the capital city of Ethiopia. Various individuals with different ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups reside in Addis Ababa. There are different places in which Muslim healing practices take place; these places may include private healing centers and where religious healing is conducted.

The private centers where the study was conducted



4.3 Sampling technique and sizes

The study was conducted among Muslim healers: practitioners who provides religious based healing for mental illness including sheikhs, imams, Qari and Ustads.

The study initially used purposive sampling method (34) to recruit participants who met specific criteria. However, due to difficulty in accessing enough participants, snowball sampling methods was subsequently employed, whereby earlier participants and community contacts assisted in identifying additional eligible individuals.(35)Overall, data was collected from 8 participants were

4.4 Eligibility

4.4.1 Inclusion criteria

Active religious healing practitioners

Muslim healers with extensive experience in Islamic healing

Willingness to participate

Being able to speak Amharic or English language

4.4.2 Exclusion.

Who are unable to give consent

4.5 Data collection methods

The data was collected through In-depth semi-structured interviews by the researcher with Muslim healers lasting from 40- 60 mints. Interviews were conducted in private offices on each setting. Participants were provided their informed consent before the interview. The interviews were in person and audio recorded with participants consent for later transcription and analysis

4.6 Data management and analysis

All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated into English language. The transcripts were read repeatedly by the researcher to become familiar with the data. Open code software was used to identify meaningful parts of the data. The data analysis was done using thematic analysis to identify patterns and relationships through the six step methods introduced by Braun and Clarke

being familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, to review the themes, defining and naming the themes, and writing the report of thematic data analysis (36).

4.7 Data quality assurance

To ensure the quality of this study the researcher used open ended and non-directive questions with familiar language recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim and translated to English carefully. The data and themes where discussed with supervisors and other researchers to ensure reliable and accurate findings

4.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained both from the Department of Psychiatry, College of Health Sciences, University of Addis Ababa and the private places (Firdows cultural medical center, Altakwa and Eman herbal medicine center) where Islamic healing is practiced. Participants were provided informed consent before participation, ensuring they understand their rights, including the freedom to withdraw at any time without any consequences. All data was securely recorded and stored on a password protected laptop, with the access strictly limited to the researcher. The data collected were encoded and anonymized to maintain confidentiality. Participants were informed detailed explanation of the possible risk and benefits related to the research.

4.9 Positionality statement

The researcher is a female Muslim clinical psychology trainee, born and raised in Ethiopia, particularly Addis Ababa. As a Muslim the researcher grow up reading Quran and some Hadis, and was raised in a family and community where spiritual healing practices are deeply respected. The researcher also personally value spiritual practices which made it easy to build trust and communicate openly. At the same time the researcher is also trained in modern psychological practices related to mental illness, which helps the researcher to look into mental illness from scientific and therapeutic perspective.

As a result the researcher entered this research both from insider and outsider. As women interviewing the participants was not easy, all the participants being male who held traditional and religious views sometimes make it difficult to open conversations. Nevertheless, the researcher was careful balancing these to views by reflecting deeply on beliefs and biases through questioning personal assumptions, discussing with advisors and colleagues.

Chapter Five

Result

5.1 Participant characteristics

The study includes eight Muslim healers with varying 5 to 14 years of experiences. The participants group included only male age ranging between 22 to 49. Six participants were married and two were divorced. The participant's educational level spans from grade 7 completion to 2nd year university attendance. From the participants one of them have attended a one-day psychological conference another one has informal training related with general medical issues; none of them have formal training in psychological or medical education. While seven of the participants work in urban institutionalized setting one works independently in rural area. All participants reported not taking any prior formal training related to spiritual/religious treatment, nevertheless they have learned Quran and multiple hadis thought their lifelong informal training.

Table.1 participant characteristics

Parameters	**Muslim healers(n=8)**
Sex	All male
Age range(years)	22-49
Median age (years)	36
Education level	Grade7-2nd year University
Marital status	6married- 2divorced
Years of experience	5-14 years
Formal spiritual training	None
Formal psychological training	None

5.2 Themes

Five core themes were identified: understanding and conceptualization of mental and spiritual illness, beliefs about the causes of mental and spiritual illness, assessment practices to identify illness, healing approaches and methods, and collaboration between health care practitioners.

5.3 Understanding and conceptualization of mental and spiritual illness.

Interviewed Muslim healers described that in their experience they've observed various illness including physical complaints such as partial bodily pain, headache, burning sensation, trembling, swelling of hands, teeth fidgeting, stomach problem, heavy period flow, inability to see, both insomnia and hypersomnia, appetite problem and sexual dysfunction; also emotional issues like anger, depression, mood swings unexplained fear and distress, and suicidal ideation. These symptoms were predominantly understood as manifestations of spiritual possessions and/or as sign of spiritual weakness.

"...There are spiritual illnesses that we call jinn possessions, black magic or evil eye.... Most of the time they feel shortness of breath, heaviness, pain in the back, and feelings of fatigue these are behaviors of people who have love potion (magic done for love) ..." [S.Healer-1, a 30-year-old with 10 years of experience]

However, some healers interpret these symptoms in more flexible and integrative understanding. They indicate that such emotional strain might also be manifestation of normal psychological experiences suggesting people might get into emotional distress due to different situations including anger, and unexpressed feelings.

"...Some brothers when such incidents happen when there is slight normal emotional disturbance it's not related to black magic or evil eye rather the person will get into that feeling with anger.... what a surprising thing ii observed many times is that there is this thing people say, 'I'm not listened to I'm not heard this will grow up and change into distress..." [S.Healer-8, a 37-year-old with 14 years of experience]

Also, interviewed Muslim healers elaborated that other problems including behavioral and social issues are also reported by family and/or the person. Behaviorally some may exhibit signs such as

restlessness, talking nonsense, withdrawal from others, suicidal attempt, physical and verbal abuse directed toward others especially observed in clients with substance use -particularly khat, tobacco, weed and shisha, aggressive behaviors such as sexual assault directed at significant others were also reported; socially individuals present with educational and work-related performance decline, conflicts with family and friend, and marital disputes.

“.... What he does is not just spending money-there's also who sexually assault his mother, i have also met a person who sexually assault his own children, we also see many bad things which we don't say our mothers verbal insults, physical abuses....” [S.Healer-6, a 49—year-old with 12 years of experience]

Some participants view some doings as a behavioral response for life problem particularly substance use was viewed often as a coping mechanism-not spiritually explained behavior rather a behavioral response to social psychological stressor.

“People in the work force face job crisis and self-decline because of economic change... and to cope with that they get into substance world...” [S.Healer-1, a 30-year-old with 10 years of experience]

Additionally Muslim healers in the study observed complaints related to thinking and self-view such as forgetfulness, low self-esteem, and distorted belief about self; perceptual disturbances including visual and auditory hallucinatory experiences, abnormal bodily sensations and being suspicious toward others, belief that others hate or want to harm them were also presented problem but less frequent.

“People who come here are because of mental illness.... this illness is very distressing and filthy. It is an illness that discriminate people. when it comes, it makes the person suspicious of his family, it makes things resemble other things, he hears what others don’t, he sees what others don’t and he feels like everyone one is against him....” [S. Healer-6, a 49—year-old with 12 years of experience]

5.4 Beliefs about the causes of mental and spiritual illness.

According to participants there are various causes attributed to spiritual and mental illness. Often the descriptions of causes were rooted in spiritual beliefs and religious teachings including Quran

and prophetic scripts. Supernatural entities and doings such as sihr(magic), Jinn possessions, evil eye were frequently mentioned causes.

5.4.1 Black magic

According to faith healers in the study black magic is an act done by a person going to a witch to inflict bad on a person he is jealous of. According to them the witch does the act by submitting to devil. To submit to the devil, one should participate or commit actions that are forbidden and offensive to the religion including blaspheming against God, insulting prophets, sacrificing children and animals and writing Quran using impure ...such as menstrual blood. According to the healers these practices are seen as ritualistic acts used to connect with evil forces including devil.

"...sihr is done by being submissive to the devil ...for the devil to be submissive, I will do things that he wants from me for example insulting God.....he insults our prophet....he instructs him to write Quran using female menstrual blood....killing and eating fetus, killing and eating cat meat..." [S.Healer-5, a 37-year-old with 11 years of experience]

Interviewed Faith healers believe that there are various types of sihr which are delivered using different means such as food, water, cloth, hair and some which are buried and might be done for different purposes varying from personal to social aspects including for a someone to fall in love, for spouse to get separated, for women to have miscarriage, for a women to not get married, to cause family discord and when severe to make a person lose his mind.

"…When sihr is done it can be given either with food or water or stepped on ...." [S.Healer-7, a 22-year-old with 5 years of experience]

"There are different types of sihr one of them is for a woman not to live peacefully with her husband the second one not to bear child... ...the last severe stage is to make someone lose his mind....." [S.Healer-5, a 37-year-old with 11 years of experience]

5.4.2 Jinn

Muslim healers in the study described jinn as unseen creatures who can control and disturb human's mind and body, according to them different things are mentioned in Islamic teachings both in the Quran and Hadis about jinn including their ability to wander around humans' body and that they are enemy for human beings. This indicates healers view about the role of jinn in manipulating human's physical emotional and behavioral aspects which supports the attribution of client's symptom with supernatural causes. People are mostly vulnerable to be afflicted by jinn especially

when they neglect spiritual practices like praying and remembrance of Allah and with weak religious faith.

"...Most of the time jinn wants to control our mind, why because he wants us to do what he wants, he wants us to act as he wants, he controls our mind and this causes harm.....this is called jinn al ashiq or loving jinn, it happens when her body is exposed, by the way of her grooming, by her many gaps and as a result she may no longer wants to get married because the jinn makes her hate men...." [S.Healer-1, a 30-year-old with 10 years of experience]

"...Because jinn is enemy of human, we believe in that way, it's not only us Allah also did mention that 'devil(jinn)is enemy to you so take him as an enemy'...also jinn is found in some people he will do anything to create dispute between humans to separate mother and father husband and wife...." [S.Healer-7, a 22-year-old with 5 years of experience]

The attribution of various symptoms including behavioral, physical and emotional changes is often related to jinn possession. For example, they mentioned cases where individuals neglect proper self-hygiene, creates disturbing feeling eventually where a person stops ablution and praying and might experience nausea

"....Not keeping one's hygiene, neglecting oneself, you'll hate everything especially what the sharia commands for example a person who has jinn disease don't like the smell of perfume jinn by its behavior is found in filthy environment...it holds you from brushing your teeth when you're going to buy brush it makes you dissociate you'll forget it...when you smell perfume you'll feel nauseous and vomit, you'll feel something boring and avoid ablution and prayer...." [Healer-5, a 37-year-old with 11years of experience]

5.4.3 Evil eye and envy

Both evil eye and envy were other spiritual causes attributed to various illnesses according to interviewed faith Healers. They describe that people inflict ill will toward others when looking with too much admiration or jealousy even when they don't mean to. Faith healers in this study infer teachings of Quran and Hadis to support their belief.

"...The prophet (pbuh) clearly stated in the Hadis that 'eye or evil eye is real', some people might say there is no such things, but it does exist, its truth.... when its beyond admiration and becomes envy, it will have greater impact it will put him into grave it means it will kill him..." [S.Healer-1, a 30-year-old with 10 years of experience]

Most participants shared that evil eye and/envy happen to people who are functioning well in life including various aspects such as getting married, academic performance and work-related issues. The affected person might show different symptoms such as decline in school performance, physical immobility, fainting, disappearance of facial beauty and medical disease such as cancer.

"...For example, if the evil eye on their education and f they are doing well in their education it can cause that success to drop to zero, it makes her hate her education when she goes to class makes her not understand their hand won't be able to write, during exam it makes her faint and have seizure .....if the case is on a person's looks or beauty that will disappear..." [S.Healer-2, a 27-year-old with 7 years of experience]

".... for example, there is a disease what we call cancer right the main cause is evil eye this is what the Hadis talks about..." [S.Healer-8, a 37-year-old with 14 years of experience]

However, most faith healers in this study provided psychosocial explanations such as stress, family problems, peer pressure, loss of loved one and medical explanations including genetics, injury due to accidents, and weak immune system as causes of mental illness.

"...The illness by itself differs from person to person some people have weak body in nature....it may be due to family problem; it might come due to accidents resulting in over neck problems depression and others.... A person who has depression when he uses things like substance it'll perpetuate it.... there is also disease which are inherited from family.... when his children die, when his properties are inherited and demolished ...." [S.Healer-6, a 49-year-old with 12 years of experience]

5.5 Assessment practices to identify spiritual and mental illness

For some participants, illness is not seen only through body rather it manifests through behaviors, words and hidden signs, as a result their assessments and diagnostic methods integrate spiritual insight, observations and religious practices. This process includes spiritual practices such as Quran recitation according to the faith healers it is called ruqya which help to both detect and cast out presence of spirit with interpretation of responses; there are specific verses of the Quran that serves as a way to detect the presence of spirits including jinn, black magic, envy and evil eye. Interviewed Muslim healers mentioned certain kinds of dreams and physical sensations. They also shared that clients with spiritual illness shows certain responses such as aggression, screaming, talking nonsense, trembling and eye rolling especially in children during certain Quran *recitation.*

"…. When we recite Quran, it has order it's not random reading i recite surah Al-Fatiha i repeat it, after I recite it repeatedly after that i recite a chapter in the Quran named .... When we recite Quran

and apply medicine it distresses them it burns them, they do scream they stand up and get out, they began to show their physical strength they began to disturb....” [S.Healer-2, a 27-year-old with 7 years of experience]

The other method is interpreting hidden messages in dreams; they mentioned that nightmares and experiencing certain animals in dreams such as rat and snake are associated with sihr. For the faith healer certain experiences are not random rather meaningful signs of spiritual harm.

“Loss of sleep seeing frightening things especially mice and snake are signs of sihr...” [S.Healer-5, a 37-year-old with 11years of experience]

“...If she is experiencing nightmare like feelings when she is asleep if she sees terrifying animals in her dreams, then this women's condition is not scientific medical....” [S.Healer-3, a 35-year-old with 13 years of experience]

However, not all healers interviewed began with prayer or spiritual rituals some of them began their assessment by carefully observing the client and engaging in open conversation with the client and/or their family including their purpose of visits and what they are experiencing in the moment. They observe how the person walks, how they speak, how they stand how they react to some questions and/and environments. This approach more reflects their behavioral and emotional signs than immediate spiritual interpretation which can help understand whether the condition is social, spiritual or psychological.

“.... for example, when a woman or a man comes to us first thing we do is write down what he is feeling .... then after reflecting on that paper there are Quran verses that should be recited....” [S. Healer-3, a 35-year-old with 13 years of experience]

“...If someone is walking fast and quickly, we say ah this person has this illness if he is moving slowly feeling heavy, we say it's another there is also who feels anxious and fearful and a person trembling right as they walk in there are trembling. There is also a person who talks as if everything is fine and he has nothing that's how they come in to us that's when we know he has sleep or not form his way of walking, his eyes we know whether this person sleeps or not and we can tell other person his active from his behavior...” [S.Healer-6, a 49-year-old with 12 years of experience]

5.6 Healing approach and method used by faith healers

The interviewed Muslim healers described that treatment doesn’t follow a fixed strict pattern it often depends on how the healers understand the problem presented. Most elaborating the integrative use of spiritual treatment including both Qur'anic recitations and herbal medicines such black seed,

ajwatemr(dates), honey, sidr, senemek, sibr and zamzam water which might be ingested orally, inhaled, or to wash with; those are mentioned to have medicinal properties by the prophet(pbuh) for various issues. According to them these treatments are not used as alternatively rather as divinely guided cures.

"....We also use herbal remedies recommended by Islamic scholars.....now for example there is something called 'sanamak'(senna) like black seed its medicine for everything..... things like temr(dates) and what we found in the Quran and Hadis....we make them use and mai -Zamzam because prophet(pbuh) have said 'it has nutritional value and medicinal property' we make him use that....Also, this sidr tree like prophet said' its medicine for sihr'..." [S.Healer-2, a 27-year-old with 7years of experience]

In addition to these spiritual methods Muslim healers in the study also employ practices such as wagmt (cupping) to extract and release impure blood from the body, like the spiritual herbals cupping is believed to be thought by the prophet(pbuh) various medicinal properties. Even though frequently mentioned use is to clean toxic blood some healers mentioned its use for physical pain such as back pain and headache and for mental illness. Its use reflects an integration of religious belief and health practice.

".... those whom impure blood is extracted, for back pain and mental illness there is Hijama (cupping)..." [S.Healer-3, a 35-year-old with 13 years of experience]

Owing to their belief that psychological and spiritual illness are intertwined, and clients visit with various complaints, there are times interviewed Muslim healers practice giving advice/counseling as treatment method often drawing on Quranic principles and moral teachings, particularly for the clients to strength their faith

"... By giving counseling service, we advise them on what they should do themselves at home as part of treatment...." [S.Healer-1, a 30-year-old with 10 years of experience]

".... Before divorce they visit for ruqya service, will get ruqya then counseling service is given for both in the office..." [S.Healer-3, a 35-year-old with 13 years of experience].

5.7 Collaboration between health care practitioners

While all Muslim healers interviewed rely on spiritual and religious healing practices, they demonstrate an openness to collaborate with biomedical and psychological professionals, except one participant who stated that he has lack of knowledge about what psychological problem and psychological treatment is.

"... I don't know about psychological issues....i don't know its service..." [S.Healer-4, a 40-year-old with 10 years of experience]

In cases beyond their scope, such as psychological and medical health issues; health centers both public and private are second choices either directly or guiding their caretaker to various health care choices this is done after assessing and trying spiritual treatment first.

".... coincidently after trying Quran repeatedly there are people who don't get better.....for them to get better treatment other than ours we will send them to the doctor...."[S. Healer-7, a 22-year-old with 5 years of experience]

The only challenge they mentioned was clients and family's resistance for referral due to different reasons including the fear of medication side effects, stigma attached to mental illness, perceived belief that injection hides the presence of spirit.

"... If the community said he is mental health service user, it's like he is looked down like worthless and is discriminated...in our community there are common bad perceptions for real. When Amanuel is mentioned, people get shocked.... when we say take this person to Amanuel they say never..." [S.Healer-6, a 49-year-old with 12 years of experience]

"...One of the issues they become unwilling is 'the medication makes him dizzy and numb; the injection hides the jinn'...." [S.Healer-1, a 30-year-old with 10 years of experience]

The participants suggested the need for settings with integrative holistic approaches by assigning roles to governmental bodies in creating such setting and involving spiritual leaders to create awareness to the community. This indicates a willingness to work together while recognizing the gaps.

Chapter Six

Discussion, conclusion, limitation and recommendation

6.1 Discussion

This study explored how Muslim healers in Addis Ababa understand, diagnose and treat spiritual and mental illness. The finding reveals that Muslim healers in the study primarily use spiritual explanations, but some also incorporate psychological or/and social understandings of mental illness in their practices of detecting and treating illness. A key finding in this study is that Muslim healers interviewed apply various spiritual frameworks which are grounded in Islamic beliefs, particularly from Quranic and Hadis teaching, while also acknowledging non-spiritual causes and symptoms such as psychological, medical and social problems. These beliefs strongly influence the diagnostic and treatment method regarding symptoms.

Muslim healers interviewed interpret symptoms primarily through spiritual causes such as sihr(magic), jinn possessions, and the evil eye rather than viewing illness as biomedical phenomenon. This aligns with prior literature highlighting the pervasive use of spiritual cause in understanding and explaining mental, physical and behavioral disturbances (25) Some interpret mental health problems through spiritual lens. For example, rather than attributing a person's suffering to psychological stress, they may believe it is caused by jinn possession. This belief might also serve a protective role in cultural contexts where discussing psychological distress is stigmatizing.(42)

The study also found that interviewed Muslim healers do not entirely reject other explanations of mental illness including medical and psychological explanation, rather most participants acknowledged symptoms such as depression, social withdrawal, suspiciousness and hallucinations as a sign of social and emotional distress. This indicates that their causal link is not strictly limited to spiritual rather integrative. In this case some healers use a thorough open conversational assessment and behavioral observation to detect what the illness is. This demonstrates a degree of alignment with psychological assessment practices. This finding aligns with literature in south

Africa where Muslim healers understand the distinction between psychological and spiritual manifestations and causes.(25)

However, for many interviewed Muslim healers the boundaries between psychological and spiritual distress are not sharply drawn instead emotional symptom such as sadness, anxiety or confusion might be interpreted as a sign of spiritual manifestation especially when no medical cause is found. (20)This indicates that spiritual imbalance is seen as root cause for forms of sufferings, which may limit recognition of psychological issues and delay access to mental health care.
Muslim healers in this study have their own different methods detecting what a person's illness is; the interviewed healers mentioned Quran recitation as their primary detecting method. (30) Interviewed Muslim healers reported that individuals who are believed to be afflicted by spirits often show particular reactions such as screaming, and physical forces during Quran recitation which led them to suspect the person is in control of a hidden unseen spirit like jinn, black magic and/or evil eye. Nevertheless, some reported that the Quran recitation follows a thorough open assessment both using conversation to know about the timeline and symptoms; and behavioral observation. This aligns with the finding of previous research done in Ghana (12) where Muslim healers use Quran recitation along with assessments.
Another notable finding was the diagnostic use of dream interpretation and symbolic analysis. Muslim healers elaborated how nightmares particularly frightening nightmares related to animals such as mouse and snake suggest an indication of sihr or jinn related afflictions. This indicates the interviewed healer's belief in different way of understanding illness placing trust in spiritual signs than scientific methods. Similar interpretations have been documented in African study where healers use symbolic tools as diagnostic method(39)(30)

Talking to participants what stood out most was the deeply nature of their treatment approach. They described a treatment process that centered around spiritual practices primarily Quran recitation, the use of spiritual medicine such as Zamzam water, black seed and honey **(41)** these methods were regarded as the only method to remove what they believed to be spiritual illness like sihr(black magic), jinn possession and evil eye or envy . This supported by Yaseen Ally &SumayaLaher(25) who stated that faith healers use recitation of specific Quran verses and herbs mentioned by prophet(pbuh) as medicinal property.

Most of their practice revealed reliance on a focused spiritual set of practice that often may not actively engage with biomedical or psychological perspectives. In most cases, treatment was shaped within spiritual and faith than exploring other causes. This suggests the deep role of spirituality in healing but also highlights potential gaps in addressing more complex mental health conditions.

In addition to Quranic recitation cupping was also other approach to treatment particularly to extract toxic blood from parts of the body which are hard to reach by medical tools through surgery. This method is called ‘Hijama’ in Arabic. It’s used as treatment in many traditional healers as a prophetic medicine.(37)

Similarly, interviewed Muslim healers often framed advice in religious terms encouraging patients to pray more, avoid certain behaviors like listening to music and watching explicit movies, to strengthen their connection with God; they gave their clients direction and a path forward that includes spiritual growth or change. Yaseen Ally and sumayaraheb(25)describe healers encouraging clients to religious devotion and lead an Islamic life depending on whether they diagnosed spiritual or psychological issues. Since the illness is often seen as related to spiritual it makes sense that healers provide religious advice. However, the focus remains largely within religious framework, which may limit the treatment of more complex or clinically defined conditions.

One concern is the limited referral to health care services. Even though most healers are willing to refer patients to other professionals such as general hospitals and psychiatry/psychological care, they prefer to manage cases within spiritual framework and only refer patients when symptoms persist despite repeated spiritual treatment and in cases they deemed as not spiritual. This may reflect a believe that medical system cannot address the root spiritual causes of illness. Similar patterns have been observed in other Malaysian and Muslim majority contexts. (30)and the need for mental health awareness and trainings to bridge the gap between religious and modern mental health systems, to make sure patients receive comprehensive care. This aligns in the

recommendations found in the literature, which emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive mental health services by working collaboratively.(38)

Also, another important finding concern found in the study is some patients were described reluctant to accept referrals to other professionals due to medication side effects, mental illness related stigma and perceived belief that injection hides jinn. These insights highlight the tension between spiritual and bio psychological paradigms and indicate the need for culturally sensitive, integrative approaches in both mental and biomedical health care.(40)

6.2 Conclusion

In country like Ethiopia where people strongly connect religion with health, Muslim healers remain a central part of mental health care for many communities in Ethiopia. This study helps us better understand the important role of Muslim healers in mental health care and shows that healing is often understood as involving more than just medicine but also spiritual and cultural beliefs; also shape how communities understand and respond to mental illness. This research offers insight into a part of mental health care that is often overlooked by focusing on their perspectives and practices including their diagnostic and healing method.

Nevertheless, one of the main concerns this research found is that many healers believe medical treatment doesn't address the root spiritual cause of mental illness. Because of this some may view medical care as incomplete, which can contribute to delayed referrals or limited collaboration Although psychological and biomedical care remains important, looking into other alternative approaches that many people trust is important. While there is difference between religious and medical approach, creating a respectful dialogue and cooperation between both systems could help to make mental health care more accessible by building trust, reducing stigma, and reaching community that may not engage with formal healthcare.

6.3 limitations

Even though the study offers valuable insight into how Muslim healers understand and treat mental illness, the researcher acknowledges several limitations that may affect the generalizability and

scope of the study. This study focused only on the perspective of limited Muslim healers in a specific region of Ethiopia. Their views may not represent all Muslim healers across Ethiopia, especially in regions with different cultural practices or levels or levels of interaction with biomedical systems.

The study also doesn't include the perspectives of patients who receive their treatment. Including their voices would provide a more balanced understanding of the treatment process. Additionally, the researcher relied on interviews rather than extended observations, this may not capture the day-to-day realities of diagnosis and treatment process.

Also as a Muslim and clinical psychology trainee there might be possibility that the researchers religious beliefs and professional background may have influenced how some participants responses are interpreted. While the researcher made efforts to remain objective this potential bias should be considered when interpreting the findings.

6.4 Recommendation

1. Develop better communication between mental health professionals and faith healers: it is important for both mental health professionals and Muslim healers to have some form of communication since many people visits mental healers first when facing various mental health problems. Communication could help understand each other's work better and possibly support each other in treating people who need both psychological and spiritual help.
2. Raise awareness in the community: there is lack of clear understanding about mental illness in Ethiopia. Sharing information in community events or religious places including mosque and church may help reduce stigma and encourage people to seek help early whether from clinics, healers or both.
3. Provide training that respects both sides: training programs that include basic knowledge about mental health could be organized for faith healers and religious leaders without undermining their religious beliefs. At the same time mental health workers could also benefit from understanding how spiritual beliefs influence people view of mental illness, to provide culturally sensitive care.
4. Build referral system between clinics and spiritual healing practices: a simple referral system could be established to allow spiritual healers refer clients if medical attention is needed, and vice versa. This would encourage an integrative care for patients.
5. More research is needed:this research scratches only the surface. More studies are needed to explore other areas especially to understand on patient satisfaction and long term outcomes of integrated mental health approaches in religious contexts.

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Appendix

Annex I

My name is EkramTemkin, I am a second-year clinical psychology trainee at Addis Ababa University, I am conducting research regarding Mental illness perspectives and healing practices among Muslim healers. The purpose of this study is to examine how Muslim healersunderstand and conceptualize mental illness and to explore the treatment process. The interview has two parts the first part Is all about background information and the second part includes questions about mental illness and religious healing practices.

Confidentiality

The information you provided will be strictly confidential your name and identity will not be shared in any way. Instead, a code(numbers) will be assigned to you that will be used in the documentation. The audio record and collected data will be securely stored and will be used only for academic purposes.

Right to withdrawal

Participation in this study is completely voluntary the interview will take approximately 40-60minutes and will be audio recorded. You have the right to refuse to participate in this research. Even after signing the consent form, you're free to withdraw at any time without penalty. You may skip any question if you feel uncomfortable to answer

Potentiation risks and benefits

The study doesn't offer direct personal benefits;however, your participation will contribute to a better understanding of religious healing in mental health care. There are no identified risks to participating in this study, however if you feel uncomfortable at any point, you have the right to stop the interview

If you have any questions and would like to get any information about the study, please contact the researcher.

EkramTemkin +251910989356

Email: - ekramtemkin70@gmail.com

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Annex II

Informed consent form

I have read the information sheet about this research study exploring the lived experiences of soldiers with combat exposure. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have been informed that the interview will be audio recorded and that the researcher will take measures to protect my privacy. I have understood the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study.

By signing below, I consent to participate in this research study.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _ _____

Annex III

Interview guide for healers

Demographic information

Age

Gender

Educational background

Level of Islamic education

Do you hold any religious title (e.g., sheikh, ustadh, Imam, etc.)

Have you received any specific training in religious or psychological healing?

How long have you been practicing as a healer?

Diagnostic and treatment process

1. Can you tell me about what type of service you provide?
2. What are the common problems that people come to you with?
3. What symptoms do you usually see? Does everyone attribute the same symptom, or does it differ from person to person?
4. From your experience what do you think are the causes of the conditions that people come with?
5. When people come for help how do you determine what they need?
6. Are there any specific methods or steps you follow to know what the problem is?
7. Do you keep records of people who come for help? If yes, what kind of information do you usually record
8. Could you tell me about your treatment approaches? Does the treatment change from symptom to symptom or is it similar?
9. How do you know when someone has been healed? How do people respond to the treatment? Do they return?
10. Were there times when people didn't respond to the treatment? What do you do?
11. Are there cases where you feel like another treatment or healer is needed? if yes what type of treatment
12. Do you ever refer clients to medical hospitals or psychological professionals? If yes, why? If not, why not?
13. what do you think about modern psychological treatments?

14. Do you think there is a way for religious healing and psychological treatment to work together? If yes what should be done? If not why not?

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