

## Spiritual preparedness as a religious coping mechanism for nurses in a disaster response

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**Introduction:** As frontline in healthcare service, nurses play a vital role in helping and assisting the needs of population that affected by disasters such as floods, landslides, pandemics, tsunamis, mass casualty incidents and others. Yet, there is extremely limited literature regarding spiritual preparedness as a coping mechanism amongst nurses. This study aimed to explore experience of the nurses while responding to a disaster. **Materials and Methods:** This qualitative study involved twenty-nine Muslim nurses from various workplace. The data collected through semi-structured, in-depth and face-to-face interview through voice-recording. Then analysed through constant comparison method and iteratively following constructivist grounded theory approach by Charmaz. **Results:** This study revealed the need of practices of these nurses on spiritual elements as a religious coping mechanism while responding to a disaster. Whenever they face difficulties and emotionally disturbed, they return to *Allah SWT* to ask for help and to soothe their feelings by performing religious practices. Involvement of the nurses in a disaster response created a feeling of being close to *Allah SWT* and taught them to be grateful for helping those who were underprivileged. Despite the minimal numbers reported these spiritual practices, the finding informed the importance of spiritual preparation and act as a coping mechanism while responding to a disaster. **Conclusion:** Being prepared physically has always been a highlight by the healthcare institution, yet, the spiritual preparedness seems unnoticed. Therefore, integration and Islamicisation of knowledge related to disaster preparedness require a greatest attention by healthcare institutions besides physical, psychological and emotional preparation for the nurses prior to the response.

Keywords: Nurses; Disaster response; Malaysia; Spiritual preparedness; Religious coping mechanism

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