

## The Outlook of Health Promoting Mosques (HPM): A Review Study

Kazem Hosseinzadeh<sup>1\*</sup>, Hadi Fanayi Nematsara<sup>2</sup>

1- Department of Nursing, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Qazvin University Of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran.

2- Department of Islamic Education, Faculty of Islamic Science and Research, International University of Imam Khomeini, Qazvin, Iran.

\*Correspondence should be addressed to Mr. Kazem Hosseinzadeh; Email: khz@qums.ac.ir

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### Abstract

**Background and Objective:** Numerous studies have indicated the essential role of religious places in the promotion of community health. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the role of religious places in communities' health and to propose solutions for health promoting mosques.

**Method:** This review study is based on PRISMA flow diagram probing in databases such as PubMed and Science Direct. To do so, 20 articles published over recent ten years were investigated. Based on the purposes of the research, the required data were charted and then analyzed. In this study, the ethical issues were all considered and the authors declared no conflict of interest.

**Results:** As the Persian databases were searched, no articles in Persian related to health promoting mosques was found. All the articles found were in English conducted in Holland, the USA, Africa, Congo, and Kenya. The findings show that religious places and clergymen were vital in fostering will-rounded health. The common thread running through all these studies was promoting health, mainly done on spiritual health, cancer prevention, promulgating physical activities, individual and family health, organ donation, fostering social health, food health and nutrition, women and men's health, end-of-life spiritual care, chronic pains, healthy lifestyle, social capitals, and self-care.

**Conclusion:** Because of the differences in cultural and religious characteristics, it is essential to conduct a pilot study in Iran in order to design the regulations of health promoting mosques. In addition, establishing a collaborative committee between Ministry of Health and other organizations related to mosques can be fruitful.

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### Summary

**Background and Objectives:** Health promotion means enabling people to control and manage determining factors in health. From this viewpoint, health is not something intended for the future; but rather, individuals are supposed to plan and move on every single moment of their lives based on the concept of health (1-3). According to World Health Organization (WHO), health has physical, mental, psychological, and emotional aspects which need to be

developed in a comprehensive way. Moreover, helping people get their highest level of health is not the responsibility of the health sector and related organizations only; but rather, forming coalitions and collaborative contributions can lead to reaching the ultimate goal of health. In addition, promoting health centers upon the following five procedures: society-based health policymaking, creating supporting environments, boosting society actions, development of individual skills and revision in supplying social services. In accordance with these procedures, heeding three enabling, mediating, and supporting factors is essential and significant (2, 4, & 5).

Given that and the role of health promotion planning in development of well-rounded health of societies, different health promoting proposals such as health promoting schools, health promoting religious places, and health promoting hospitals have been launched in different countries and societies, which has had considerable results (6&7).

The common goal of all these proposals has been considering different dimensions of health as well as creating hygienic behaviors related to a vast area of social, biological, and cultural factors called 'socio-ecologic model'. A good number of studies targeted to promoting health have been conducted outside the country.

For instance, Baruth et al (2011) studied the role of religious places in promoting health and hygiene. They examined the the relationship between the perceived contextual support in religious places and healthy diet as well as using vegetables and other behaviors related to using fat and fibre. It was concluded in this study that physical and social supports of religious places were significant factors in dietary behaviors, requiring more research on this area (8). Although Baruth et al (2011) did not discuss the main components of heal promotion in religious places, the role of religious places has been highlighted as a grteat opportunity to teach health.

**Method:** This review study set out to investigate the international patterns of health promoting religious places and to suggest suitable procedures in order to develop a comprehensive plan for health promoting mosques in Iran. To achieve this goal, based on PRISMA flow diagram and by searching in databases such as PubMed and Science Direct, 20 articles published over recent ten years were investigated. Based on the purposes of the research, the required data were charted and then analyzed.

Inclusion criteria for the articles were: the year of publication needed to within the last ten years and the full paper had to be accessible.

**Results:** The Persian databases were searched and no articles in Persian related to health promoting mosques was found. All the articles found were in English conducted in Holland, the USA, Africa, Congo, and Kenya. The findings show that religious places and clergymen were vital in fostering will-rounded health. Most of these studies had been conducted in urban areas and two of them had been carried out on rural population. The common thread running through all these studies was promoting health, mainly done on spiritual health, cancer prevention, promulgating physical activities, individual and family health, organ donation, fostering social health, food health and nutrition, women and men's health, end-of-life spiritual care, chronic pains, healthy lifestyle, social capitals, and self-care.

**Conclusion:** In all of these studies, the roles of religious places and clergymen in overarching promotion of health have been emphasized while these two roles are more significant in Iranian's lives compared to other countries studied. However, research

on Mosques in Iran has mostly dealt with the sanitary aspects of the mosque environment.

Since the official religion in Iran is Ja'fari jurisprudence (Twelvers) Shia, mosques and religious places are attached significant importance. Approximately 80'000 mosques have been registered in Iran. In these mosques, a wide range of religious ceremonies, Aids, Mournings, and E'tekaaf are held, which are attended by a large number of people. This offers a great opportunity to foster health given the large number of mosques in Iran and also the large populations in them. It is also worth noting that in Iran the effects of the clergymen's preach on hygienic changes will be more considerable.

Since there are differences between Iran and other countries in terms of cultural and religious characteristics, it seems essential to conduct a pilot study in Iran in order to design the regulations of health promoting mosques. Moreover, establishing a collaborative committee between Ministry of Health and other organizations related to mosques can be fruitful.

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