

The Spiritual Aspect in Post-Amputation Clients

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One of the conditions that cause various changes in individuals is amputation, which demands individuals to adapt to their new condition physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. The goal of this qualitative study was to reveal the spiritual aspects of post-amputation clients, using an in-depth interview and observation on three participants who were amputees. The data were analyzed using narrative analysis. Results showed that the participants considered their lives to be meaningful and be better in the future. They were self-confident and able to continue being productive even after the amputation. Their relationships with others were reflected in their daily lives, sharing their love with their closed ones. Their relationship with God was expressed through prayers and devotion in their daily lives. It can be concluded that the amputees showed the spiritual dimensions in themselves through their life meanings and their relationship between themselves, other people, God, and their hopes.

Keywords: spiritual aspect, amputee clients

Salah satu keadaan yang mengakibatkan terjadinya berbagai perubahan bagi individu adalah ketika anggota tubuhnya harus diamputasi sehingga individu harus mampu menyesuaikan diri dengan keadaannya barunya secara fisik, psikis, sosial, dan spiritual. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menggambarkan aspek spiritual klien pascaamputasi. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data wawancara mendalam dan observasi terhadap tiga partisipan yang telah diamputasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis naratif. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa para partisipan memaknai hidup mereka dan memiliki harapan untuk menjadi lebih baik. Mereka memiliki sikap percaya pada diri sendiri dan merasa mampu berkarya meskipun telah diamputasi. Hubungan dengan orang lain tercermin dalam keseharian mereka membagi kasih dengan orang-orang terdekat. Hubungan dengan Tuhan diekspresikan melalui doa dan pengabdian dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Dari penelitian ini disimpulkan bahwa para partisipan menunjukkan dimensi spiritualitas dalam diri mereka melalui makna hidup, hubungan antara diri sendiri, orang lain dan Tuhan serta berpengharapan.

Kata kunci: aspek spiritual, klien amputasi

Sickness is not just a condition when there is illness. More than that, sickness is a condition when the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, developmental, or spiritual function of an individual is decreased or problematic when compared to their former condition (Potter & Perry, 2005). Sickness cannot be alienated from life experiences that make clients and families face various changes that are caused by the conditions of being sick and the treatments that must be conducted.

One of the conditions and treatments that cause those changes is when one of the body extremities needs to be amputated. Amputation is the loss of an individual's body

part (Smith & Glennon, 1995), conducted to save the individual's life from life-threatening conditions, and also to reuse external failure conditions maximally, such as congenital condition or malignant conditions such as tumors or cancers (Reksoprodjo, 1995).

Post-amputation condition forces clients to be able to adapt to their new condition, not just on their physical side but also on their psychological, social, and spiritual side. The loss of one of their body parts makes clients feel helpless. Even in order to be able to adapt and accept themselves, clients often feel difficulties to be able to lift themselves up from their predicaments. Losing one of their extremities can cause shock on the clients, even though they are already prepared before the operation. The clients' behavior and their expression of sadness and depression show the clients' way of facing their loss and

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experiencing their process of mourning. The research conducted by Hanley, Jensen, Ehde, Hoffman, Patterson, and Robinson (2004) regarding the biopsychosocial model in order to predict the lower body amputee clients' adaption showed that clients that had been amputated for around one month to one year showed psychosocial effects, such as stabbing pain and symptoms of depression. This is why social support is very important when the clients are in their condition of sadness, so that clients can share their sadness and their social environment can give support to those clients. Another research conducted by Unwin, Kacpersek, and Clerk (2009) supported that in six months post-amputation, clients needed positive situation or mood and social support in order to be able to adapt.

Earlier researches showed that post-amputation, there is a need to guide clients so they are able to adapt physically, psychologically, and spiritually. One of the significant aspects in the clients' progress in healing is the spirituality aspect. This aspect is related to the clients' process of giving meaning to their lives (Renetzky, 1979). In the context of amputees, the research conducted by Bateup (2010) stated the need of consciousness regarding the spiritual view of a loss and condition of sadness caused by the amputation, and also the need for teaching extra knowledge through media about the psychosocial effects of amputations. There is a need for training so nurses are pushed to give spiritual approach according to the local culture perspective when patients were amputated, which is the direction of this study. The earlier research was considered to be very general in finding the picture of the spiritual aspect, prompting the authors to find more information regarding the picture of the spiritual aspect of amputees. Other than that, the meaning of life is considered to be very important and precious; giving a special meaning to an individual so there is a goal in life (Bastaman, 2008). The goal and meaning of life can be encountered in three activities, potentially having values that enable an individual to find their life meaning. Those values are the creativity, appreciation, and attitudinal values. This study will be focused on the aspects or values related to the spiritual meaning of life, using amputee research participants.

Methods

This study used qualitative methods with three participants in order to find the values inside the participants' life meanings. The three participants were

chosen based on the goal-based sampling technique, using criteria such as the amputation wound was without complication and had healed thoroughly, meaning that the participants had no problem with their physical mobility. The participants' criteria were not limited by the level or stage of amputation, because the focus of the study was regarding how participants give meanings to their conditions and their lives. The location of the study was a town in Ambon in the province of Maluku.

Data collection was done using in-depth interview and observation technique. The interview guideline had been prepared, starting with introductory questions such as the subjects' identity, the beginning of the amputation event, their jobs before and after the amputation, to deeper questions regarding their life meanings and their hopes, also their relationship with themselves, other people, and God. The conversation was recorded with the consent of the participants and then was recorded in transcript form. The other technique used was observation by collecting data based on the observation, conducted to add to the interview data. Every non-verbal activity done by the participants during their interaction

Table 1
Summary of the Research Subjects' Identities

| Identity | Research Participant I | Research Participant II | Research Participant III |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Name | Mr. Y | Mr. A | Mr. F |
| Age | 32 | 35 | 24 |
| Origin | Maluku | Maluku | Maluku |
| Marital Status | Single | Married | Married |
| Number of Children | - | 4 | - |
| Religion | Christian Protestant | Christian Protestant | Christian Protestant |
| Job | | | |
| a. Before Amputation | Conductor | Company Employee | Company (Ship) |
| b. After Amputation | Jobless | Tire-Fixing | Company (Office) |
| Amputated | <i>Knee</i> | <i>1/2 Os</i> | <i>1/2 Os</i> |
| Body Part | <i>disarticulation (knee limit)</i> | <i>radius & Ulna dextra (1/3 of right arm)</i> | <i>radius & ulna sinistra (1/3 of left arm)</i> |
| Reason of Amputation | Mine Shrapnel | Grenade Shrapnel | Work Accident |
| Time of Amputation | August 2002 | October 1999 | March 2010 |

with the authors was observed. The collected interview data was processed using these steps by Sugiyono (2005): (1) Transcript. The writings of data collected from the interviews into verbatim form for each word, so that the results are exactly similar to the recordings from the interview process. (2) Data reduction. The collected data was reduced by discarding data that is irrelevant to the study's goal. (3) Singular processing. Each data were summarized based on their main ideas, patterns, and themes. (4) Coding. After the data were arranged properly, the data were coded with numbers on the parts that were considered to have fulfilled the categories or aspects of the study.

The data credibility in this research was tested using the triangulation technique, which was the data validity testing technique that uses something else outside of the earlier collected data.

Sugiyono (2005) staged three types of triangulation, which were the source triangulation, data collection technique triangulation, and time triangulation. This study used the source triangulation, meaning that the collected data were crosschecked with the significant others of the participants.

Results

Table 1 consists of the identities of the three research participants. The important concepts found in this study regarding the three participants were as follows.

Meaning of Life

In this aspect, it was found that:

Creativity values. Every participant had their own life goals. All three participants stated that they were still able to be productive, able to do something meaningful and responsible in their lives.

Appreciation values. The participants considered their relationship with their loved ones to be very meaningful. The closeness with their loved ones was considered to be very valued when they were together during the process of losing their body parts until the acceptance stage.

Attitudinal values. The first days after the amputation were deemed to be the hardest for the participants in accepting the reality that a part of their bodies were no longer there. The feelings of disappointment, despair, disrespected, helplessness, and suicidal were mixed together. The role of family, friends, and religious figures was important in supporting the participants, always ready to accompany and help the research participants in

adapting to the traumatic experience. The participants stated that they had accepted the fact that they had lost one of their body parts.

Hope

The second and third participants had the belief that God was always there for them, fulfilling their daily needs. Meanwhile the first participant stated that there was no better change for him compared to the condition before the amputation, but the participant believed that God had better plans for his future. Only the first participant felt that the condition before and after the amputation were the same, meaning that the condition was still considered to be bad. According to the first participant, this was caused by his bad relationship with his friends, causing his future endeavors to fail because of the results from the bad relationship.

Every research participants had their own hopes and those hopes increased their motivation to do what they wanted. The hope of the first participant was that if he had capital, he would open a business and find a life partner. The hope of the second participant was to have his own business in tire-fixing even though it was not too profitable so he could provide for his family. The hope of the third participant was that he would be able to work hard to provide for his family.

The Relationship of the Individuals with Themselves, Other People, and God.

The relationship of the individuals with themselves.

After the amputation until now, the three participants thought that they were still able to do whatever they wanted to do well. Each of them had something as their goal, both for their own and also for their loved ones.

The first and second participants pictured their current selves with their condition before the amputation as very different. The obvious difference was that their physical condition had decreased, especially in the amputated part. The second participant assumed that his condition as an amputee caused others to look down on him, making him nervous at times. The third participant became a regular consumer of alcohol with his friends after the amputation to alleviate his stress. The first participant in particular felt that he was happy and carefree even after the amputation because he felt much helped with the existence of fake leg in helping him walk.

The relationship of the individuals with other people. Each participant have friends, relatives, or

families that were considered to be close, often sharing love with the participants. On the immediate condition after the amputation, the support of family, friends, relatives, and closed ones became very important in helping them through the experienced stages of loss. Their conditions before and after the amputation did not hinder them in interacting with anyone because all three participants felt that there were no change in their relationship with their surroundings and friends.

The relationship of the individuals with God.

Each research participants had their own views regarding their loved God. Research participants expressed their closeness to God through prayers and reading the Bible, also with direct actions that they were able to do, even though all three participants rarely went to church.

Each participant gave different meanings towards their relationship with God regarding the amputation event. The first participant stated that he should have died during the explosion, but God was good for giving him life. He confessed that his amputation was caused by his own fault, and God was reminding him by taking his leg. The second participant once burned his Bible because he felt that God was not being fair, but then he thought that his action was a blow to his life, prompting him to be aware that God still loved him. Meanwhile the third participant felt that it was unfair for him to have to be amputated, but his heart told him that God was being fair because God never left him. He added that God did not just love him, but also other people because He was fair.

Forgiveness

Aside from the three aspects that were explained, there is another aspect that is a part of the spiritual aspect by Dossey (cited in Young and Cyndie, 2005) in the book "Core Curriculum for Holistic Nursing." That aspect is forgiveness, seen in the second participant.

The second participants stated that before the amputation, he was the main provider for his family, often sending money to his family that mostly was not fully employed. They were very close to him at that time, but after the amputation, he felt that he never received support from his family, feeling that they were being indifferent about him. When the second participant was telling this to the authors, he was tearful, stating that he was disappointed by the fact. But the experience did not make him vengeful, because he had forgiven his siblings because he loved them.

Discussion

The three participants were able to explain their own spiritual aspects. The essential matter to be stated during researching spirituality is finding the meaning and goal of life. The meaning of life is a matter thought to be very important and precious, giving special values for an individual, making it appropriate to be used as a goal in life (Ancok, 2006).

The effort in finding the meaning of life appears as a dominant theme in the spiritual dimension, and is related to one's self, other people, and God. The efforts can be in the form of activities potentially having values that enable an individual to find the meaning of life inside, if the values are implemented and fulfilled. These values are the creativity, appreciation, and attitudinal values.

The process of finding the first the meaning of life through work was done by the three participants by realizing their creativity values, by having a life goal, productive activity, and feeling able to do their tasks with high motivation and responsibility. Even though they were lacking one of their body parts, the three participants still had their life goals, enabling them to be productive and do something that was meaningful with full responsibilities. According to Bastaman (2008), everyone wanted a dream and important life goal for their selves, because life goal directed all their activities. Humans dream of themselves as people that can be responsible to their selves, and by being productive and working, humans are able to find their meaning of life and able to appreciate their lives fully.

The process of finding the meaning of life can be done not just through creativity values, but also from every individual's appreciation values. According to Bastaman (2008), appreciation values consist of the belief on the values of truth, wisdom, beauty, faith, religion, and love. This means that by appreciating and believing on something, this can make an individual's life meaningful. In this study, all participants were still thankful to God after the amputation, God still giving them the change to think about how they would continue their lives even without one of their body parts. The participants also had their loved ones during the process of loss until the process of acceptance, something that was very appreciated by all of the participants. The feeling of loving and being loved is also one of the sources of the meaning of life, able to make someone feel happy and meaningful (Bastaman).

The last source of the searching of the meaning of life is through attitudinal values. These values focus on the attitude of acceptance full of facts, patience, and courage in any kind of inevitable suffering, such

as illness, loss, and death (Bastaman, 2008). Frankl (1967) explained that the meaning of life was not just found in happy conditions, but also in painful conditions as long as individuals were able to find the silver lining. The three participants stated that they had been able to accept the reality that one of their body parts was gone because of the amputation, even though at first they felt that accepting the reality was very difficult, making them feel disappointed, despaired, and suicidal because they thought that they would be unable to do anything anymore. But as time went by and with the support from their loved ones, the three participants were able to accept the condition. Bastaman stated that we could not avoid something that had happen to our selves, but we could change our attitude in facing the inevitable situations. In other words, suffering cannot have meaning and use if we cannot change our attitude towards the suffering so that it would be something better. This means that in any kind of situation, even in amputation, there is still the possibility in finding the meaning of life as long as the individual is able to have the right attitude in facing it.

The other aspect which is the relationship of the participants with themselves, other people, and God can be explained as follows. The relationship between the individual and himself is regarding how deep the individual knows himself fully, and how able the individual did anything independently, knowing what he needs and how to achieve it. The three research participants were able to know and picture their selves, identifying what they wanted to achieve and also being optimistic that they would be able to achieve it. Davis (1976) in the book "How to win in a crisis" stated that humans are unique from other organisms because humans are able to understand the meaning of their existence. In other words, every individual is able to try to find what he can do, not just being limited in the static condition.

The relationship between the individual and himself focused on whether the clients were able to divide their time, knowledge, and resources or not. Research results showed that the three participants had relatives, friends, and families as their place to share stories and love. Potter and Perry (2005) stated that when clients knew that other people with similar beliefs showed that they cared, they became sources of hope because hope was related to the feeling of trust. Bastaman (2008) added that the relationship between oneself and the social environment could be implemented by total acceptance from people around the individual, understanding of others' personalities, and vice versa.

The last relationship is the relationship between the individuals with their God. This relationship can be pictured though the appreciation of God believed by the participants in their attitude, words, behavior, or religious practices. Pesut (2009) stated that clients used their experience and belief in God or religiousness to find meaning in their life. This was showed by the three participants that gave meanings to the closeness of their relationship with God.

The third aspect of spirituality is the aspect of hope. Hope is a common aspect of spirituality of everyone, and can be defined as a wish or urge that is accompanied with expectations of the fulfillment of a particular something (Young & Koopsen, 2005). In this study, the three participants had their own hopes, causing them to be more motivated in doing what they wanted and to continue with their lives. According to Bastaman (2008), even though hope was not yet realized, it gave an opportunity and solution, also promising new goals that could form passion and optimism.

Forgiveness as the last aspect added in this study is the action or option to free one's self or others from accusation or fault (Dossey, cited in Young and Cyndie, 2005). In this study, all three participants decided to forgive their siblings and not be vengeful towards them.

Conclusion

Even in sufferings or sadness, the meaning of life is still possible to be achieved as long as humans are able to find the silver linings. The meaning of life can be achieved when humans implement the values of creativity, appreciation, and attitudinal. In this study, the three participants thought of their lives as meaningful because they were able to do and implement these three values. The change in body-image post-amputation did not cause the three participants to lose hope. They still believed that their current condition was not a limiter for them to be able to do their activities and achieve their goals and dreams. At first all of the participants felt that their impaired body conditions would hinder their relationships with other people, God, and themselves. There was the feeling of rejection and dejection, also disappointment towards God. Eventually, the three research participants were able to cope with the feeling, and they were able to do the relationship function well.

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