



A LITERATURE REVIEW OF LOSS AND GRIEF AMONG PRISONERS

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ABSTRAK

Loss is a state of an individual experiencing the loss of something that previously existed and belonged. Grieving is a subjective condition that follows loss. Among inmates of all ages and genders, inmates' responses and coping to loss and grieving vary. The purpose of this literature review is to find out how the experience and response of loss and grieving inmates. Article searches are conducted using PubMed databases, Sage Journal and Google Scholar. The criteria for inclusion of articles used are full-text articles in English, types of qualitative and quantitative research, articles with a maximum of publication of the last 12 years (2010-2022) and articles focusing on the loss and grieving of prisoners. The search results obtained five articles that meet the inclusion criteria. The results obtained are differences in experience and response to loss and grieving in women, men, and the elderly. Women prisoners experience unresolved grief and a lack of integration and resolution, male inmates struggle to cognitively accept the reality of obituaries and tend to use maladaptive coping strategies in coping with grief within prisons, while elderly inmates persist by utilizing internal and external resources to help them to cope with loss.

Keywords: grief; loss; prisoners; prison

INTRODUCTION

Loss is a state of individual experiencing the loss of something that previously existed and owned. Grief is a subjective condition that follows loss. Grief is one of the most powerful emotional states and affects all aspects of one's life (Stuart, 2016). Loss and grieving are more often associated with the loss or death of a loved one. While it may be fairly easy to recognize the grief resulting from the death of a loved one, it can be more difficult to recognize the grief resulting from the experience of loss in which no one physically dies (Harris, 2019). Death is frequently regarded as the ultimate loss (Read & Santatzoglou, 2018). When presented with a natural loss, it is anticipated that 5-11% of the general population would experience a more complex form of mourning, with the remainder 89-95% responding with a standard grief reaction (Lundorff et al., 2017; Nielsen et al., 2017). There are factors related loss and grief. People in low-income homes in the community report more complicated grieving symptoms than those with greater incomes (Newsom et al., 2019). Low education versus high education is connected with a negative mourning trajectory (Nielsen et al., 2019). Currently, there is a growing awareness of how loss is related to the death of a person and exacerbated by conditions in prison (Read, 2018). That's what happens to a lot of inmates in prison.

Prisoners who have been bereaved previous to imprisonment may also hear news of a death while incarcerated, the combined impact of which might result in years of unresolved sadness (Wilson, 2011). While the death of a loved one is one of the most emotionally demanding life experiences (Lee, 2015), other non-death related losses incurred prior to and while imprisonment must be recognized in order to recognize the cumulative effect of loss that can be generated over a life-course (Vaswani, 2015). A bereavement experienced in prison must be understood in the context of the cumulative effect of prior losses endured throughout one's life (Wilson et al., 2022). Anticipatory mourning begins early; the isolation that jail imposes

between criminals and their loved one forces prisoners to consider losses before they occur (Vaswani, 2014). For a variety of reasons, prisoners are frequently barred from contacting dying relatives in the society (Lillie et al., 2018). Following bereavement, there is an increased risk of psychological and physical health problems; however, the most vulnerable are the least likely to seek help (Stroebe et al., 2017). 72% of men condemned to immediate detention have two or more mental health issues (Trust, 2018). As a result of loss, drug, risk of suicide, and alcohol addiction might develop unhealthy coping behaviors (Hamdan et al., 2013; Pilling et al., 2012; Warrilow, 2018).

The role of health workers in prisons in coping with loss and grieving is very important. However, several studies have found various problems related to the inability of prison health workers to deal with the loss and grieving of inmates. Mental-health practitioners working in prisons who attempt to treat symptoms related with loss and mourning are frequently ill-equipped to give therapies that adequately address the core cause. The voluntary sector's importance in providing bereavement support to individuals worthy of governmental assistance as well as those viewed by some as unjustly bereaved (Corcoran, 2018). The need of external counselling help in what might be an "otherwise hostile and unsupportive atmosphere" (Soulsby, 2018). However, understanding and knowledge of how to respond to loss and grieving in prisoners is still limited. The aim of this literature review was to find out how the experience and response to loss and grieving among prisoners in prison.

METODE

The study used was a literature review. The data sources used are secondary data taken from several scientific articles with the use of several limitations such as year of publication, language, and research design. The author conducted several search processes to obtain relevant articles about the loss and grieving of prisoners using three databases including PubMed, Sage Journal and Google Scholar. In the process of searching for the article, the keywords used were (Loss OR grief OR bereavement OR mourning) AND (inmates OR prisoners OR detainee) AND (prison OR jail OR correctional institution). The inclusion criteria in this study include full-text articles in English, types of qualitative and quantitative research, articles with a maximum publication of the last 12 years (2010-2022) and articles that focus on the loss and grieving of prisoners. While the exclusion criteria are articles that cannot be accessed in full, use a language other than English, and are more than 12 years.

This research has completed the study selection process using the PRISMA Flow Diagram guide. In addition, the results of the journal selection are determined using keywords, validated against inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria and titles. Data extraction is done manually based on the articles that have been obtained. Primary data from the information received include the author, year of research, country, research design, research location, population, sample and research sampling techniques, research instruments, and research results (Table 1). The PRISMA diagram below (Figure. 1) illustrates the process of selecting articles according to the title and research inclusion criteria, so that five articles that meet the requirements are obtained.

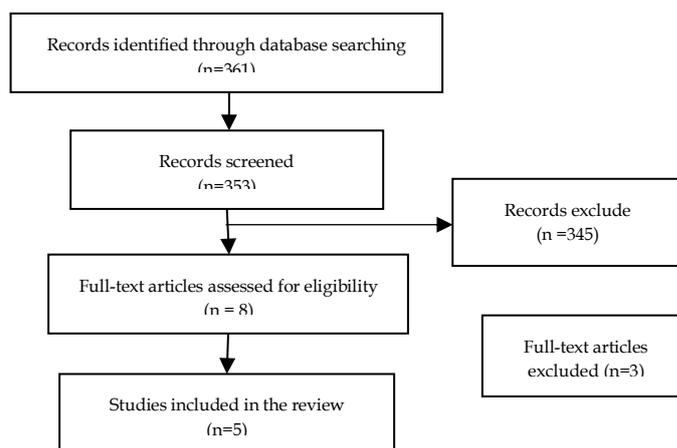


Figure 1. The PRISMA diagram

RESULTS

The total number of articles based on keyword searches in three databases (PubMed, Sage Journal and Google Scholar) is 361 articles. After going through the process of selecting and examining articles based on inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria and duplication, five articles related to the loss and grief of prisoners were obtained. Based on research sources, three articles published in the United States of America, two articles published in the United Kingdom. The five articles were published in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2022.

Loss and Grief in Women

Almost every woman who participated in this study expressed some form of emotional release such as crying, sobbing, and so on. They said that it was the first time they actually properly talk and express their grief since the loss occurred. Participants clearly stated that they needed compassion and support during their time of loss and grieving. They also need privacy within the confines of the prison environment. Mental health services are also needed to provide support beyond treatment management or emergency evaluation for suicide/homicide risk (Harner et al., 2011). Furthermore, participants described maladaptive coping in dealing with grief and grieving alone for the death of their child. They described cognitive impairment, anhedonia, detachment, and repression. Parents in both studies made efforts to maintain the presence of their deceased child in their lives through memories, such as important objects and pictures to commemorate their child. Parents maintain a bond after death with their children that gives meaning to their grief (Lewin & Farkas, 2012)

Loss and Grief in the Elderly

The majority (70%) of the sample reported some type of traumatic life experience and stressful situations that include childhood and/or adult exposure to violence, the unexpected and expected loss of a loved one, separation from family, or being diagnosed with a serious physical or mental illness. The results of the analysis of this study revealed that the five dimensions of coping resources (physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual) showed a protective effect on the relationship between cumulative, traumatic and stressful life experiences and well-being of parents in prison (Maschi et al., 2015).

Loss and Grief in Men

Being separated from the closest people and not following funeral rituals makes inmates truly feel alone during grieving. Isolation behind bars, lack of community and support causes inmates to be unable to express their experiences, unable to face reality and unable to process their grief. Inmates experience confinement sadness (a secret sorrow) which is sadness experienced due to

loss and trauma from an early age. As a result, inmates have attempts to escape from prison, using drugs, self-harm, and risk of suicide. grief and loss have a negative impact on the coping abilities of grieving inmates in prison (Masterton, 2014). Participants have difficulty cognitively accepting obituaries due to the psychosocial effects of imprisonment and the physical exclusion they receive from society. This causes prolonged numbness and can potentially lead to blocked or delayed grief. The criminal justice system should consider developing a national strategy for grieving prisoners that includes policies and practices for bereaved groups (Wilson et al., 2022).

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a review of the five articles that have been carried out, there are various kinds of populations in this study, namely men, women and the elderly. This shows that there are different experiences and reactions to loss and grieving experienced by each population. However, there is one similarity in grief reactions that prisoners experience, namely unspeakable grief or disenfranchised grief, where when a person experiences a loss that cannot be acknowledged openly, cries openly and lacks social support (Masterton, 2014). In addition, there are various kinds of coping responses experienced by participants in the five articles, ranging from adaptive to maladaptive coping. In prison, the regime's very strict and structured requirements can adversely affect an individual's ability to meet the physical, psychosocial, and emotional needs associated with a person's death. This results in the loss of experience of loss and grieving in prisoners (Read, 2018). Two out of five articles show that prisoners have cognitive disabilities when they receive news of death, are unable to face the situation and avoid feelings of grief.

In women prisoners, the loss of a loved one through death during their detention results in unresolved grief and a lack of integration and resolution. For some people who have years since the loss, they feel that they cannot truly grieve the loss until they are released from prison (Harner et al., 2011). The statement explains the possibility that this is one of the factors why female prisoners feel unable to truly grieve. In women who have lost their child, there are descriptions of lack of access to their child while the child is dying or after, limited options for performing grieving rituals, lack of sensitivity or response from family members, and grief experienced in isolation. They are also described as having maladaptive responses such as alcohol and drug use, limited family support, and dysfunctional coping (Lewin & Farkas, 2012).

In prisons, there are not only groups of young prisoners, but many prisoners who belong to the elderly or elderly group as a result of an aging society. Aging society is the increase in the population of the elderly compared to the population of the younger age group. This can be seen in the increasing number of elderly prisoners in correctional institutions and detainees in Indonesian detention center (Sitepu, 2021). Elderly prisoners report stressful life experiences that include loss, grieving and separation. These experiences included unexpected death of a loved one (60%), unexpected death of a loved one (70%), forced separation from a child (28%), and separation or divorce (53%). More than half to two-thirds of participants reported being content to the point of being deeply affected by their loss or separation. Despite these experiences, the majority of the elderly persist by leveraging internal and external resources to help them cope with previous life experiences and stressful prison conditions (Maschi et al., 2015).

Male prisoners have difficulty cognitively accepting news of death because of the psychosocial effects of prison and their physical exclusion from society, feelings of guilt, deep sadness and hopelessness (Masterton, 2014; Wilson et al., 2022). Male prisoners use maladaptive coping

strategies to deal with grief in prison. 17 of the 23 participants used drugs, consumed alcohol, self-harm and committed violent behavior to deal with grieving while in prison. Prison conditions with limited visiting times cause inmates to be in a very depressed state, resulting in pent-up negative emotions being released to the detriment of themselves, residents or other workers (Wilson et al., 2022).

Environmental factors are one of the reasons male prisoners find it difficult to express their feelings. The strong sociocultural nature of the prison environment can limit the grief of inmates who are not shown openly, are lamented well, are socially supported and feel 'deprived of their rights' (Masterton, 2014). Fear of looking weak when crying, being considered crazy, being exploited by fellow cells because of vulnerability, and environmental systems that punish rather than support cause inmates to choose to be silent in expressing their feelings (Harner et al., 2011). In addition, convicts consider the working staff in prisons to be untrustworthy so that inmates are unable to express the sadness they feel to staff (Wilson et al., 2022). Neglect at the institutional level had the potential to increase cumulative loss (Vaswani, 2018).

From the review of the five articles, prison is a place where inmates find it difficult to express their feelings of sadness due to loss and grieving. The emergence of maladaptive responses can have a negative impact on prisoners and the surrounding environment. So, the criminal justice system should consider developing a national strategy for grieving prisoners consisting of policies and practices aware of this separate support group (Wilson et al., 2022). Simple initiatives from staff or workers in prisons will bring big changes to inmates (Masterton, 2014). Prison staff can ask about the feelings of prisoners regarding their loss and facilitate the existence of consultants or psychologists in the prison environment.

CONCLUSION

Sadness due to loss and grief that prisoners experience is unspeakable grief or disenfranchised grief, namely sadness due to loss that cannot be openly acknowledged, cried openly and lacked social support. Based on a review of the five articles, the grief and loss experienced by prisoners cannot be expressed properly. Female inmates experience unresolved grief and lack of integration and resolution, male inmates have difficulty cognitively accepting the news of death and tend to use maladaptive coping strategies in dealing with grief in prison, while older inmates persist by utilizing internal and external resources to help them coping with loss, previous life experiences and stressful prison conditions. The stressful prison environment causes inmates to find it difficult to express their feelings. It is hoped that correctional institutions will try to facilitate inmates to cope with loss and grieving.

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