

Ruqyah syariyyah and the emotional regulation of children with autism

ABSTRACT

One in a hundred children in Malaysia are diagnosed with autism and their numbers are increasing. In general, autism refers to the imbalance that occurs in the brain and nervous system resulting in impaired language, behaviour and social interactions. Usually, autistic children require clinical treatment. This study explores the alternative treatment modalities, such as the practice of reading ruqyah syariyyah to autistic children based on specific procedures involving self-reading or being read to. The objectives of this study were to identify the emotional and behavioural issues faced by autistic children, to understand the extent of the practice and implementation of ruqyah syariyyah reading exercises, the challenges faced in conducting this treatment, and the impact of ruqyah reading in regulating the emotions and behaviour of such children. This case study is based on interviews with five teachers and observations of four students with autism. Two students each were identified in the low and high functioning categories. The study was conducted at the Quran Education Center for Children with Special Needs (Faqeh Foundation). The study found that the practice of reading ruqyah syariyyah using certain modalities helps children with autism in regulating their emotions and thus their behaviour. Accordingly, the alternative treatment which involves the use of ruqyah syariyyah reading practices for children with autism is highly recommended.