

Ramadan Revealed: A Community-Based Perspective on Ramadan



Contributors

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Disclosure Statement

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- We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of their vision of expanding access and improving care for underserved populations in the U.S.

Thank You to Our Partners

- University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
 - Community-University Health Care Center
 - Center for Health Interprofessional Programs
 - Walter Library: Media Services
- Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD) Education Center
- Direct Relief, Non-profit Organization
- National Association of Community Health Centers
- Mixed Blood Theater

Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of Ramadan to those who observe and their families
- Describe common misconceptions surrounding Ramadan
- Reflect on how community narratives can help shape medical education

Agenda

| Activity | Estimated Time |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Pre-Survey | 5 minutes |
| Introduction | 10-20 minutes |
| Learning Module | 20 minutes |
| Questions/ Wrap-Up | 5 min |
| Post-Survey | 5-10 min (After Webinar) |



What is Ramadan?

Background: What is Ramadan?

- 9th month of the lunar calendar, exact start date varies each year depending on sighting of the new crescent moon
- During the day, Muslims who can fast abstain from food and drink
- Time of family reunion and connectedness
- Families engage in night prayers in the mosque
- Giving to charity is encouraged during this time
- Different cultures have different traditions, but generosity and worship is centered on throughout the holy month

Background: Ramadan and Islam

- **5 pillars of Islam:** Core beliefs and duties for all Muslims
 - Profession of faith, Prayer, Alms, *Fasting during Ramadan*, Pilgrimage
- By abstaining from certain distractions and negativities, Muslims seek richer perception of God (Allah)
- Renew awareness and gratitude for God's grace upon them
- Form deeper understanding of the Qur'an (holy book) which was first revealed during this month
- It serves as a reminder of their religious duty to help those in need

<https://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-five-pillars-of-islam>

<https://www.saudiembassy.net/five-pillars-islam>

Important Terms

Suhoor

The morning meal eaten by Muslims before sunrise

Iftar

The evening meal eaten by Muslims after sunset during Ramadan.

Eid al-Fitr

Eid means “festival” or “feast” in Arabic. This celebration marks the end of Ramadan. People greet each other with “Eid Mubarak,” meaning “Blessed Eid.” Food is prepared & gifts are distributed to those in need and family. Forgiveness is encouraged.

Din

One’s religion or religious duty to God, themselves, and their traditions.

Monthly Overview of Ramadan

Ramadan begins with the sighting of the new moon in countries that are able to see it. Typically the first day is one of the more difficult ones since it takes time to adjust to fasting

The last 10 days of Ramadan are some of the more sacred days of the month. It is said that the Night of Decree falls on one of the last ten days of the month and on that day the Quran was revealed. Usually during this time people increase additional prayers

After the first two weeks, people are typically more adjusted to fasting and it is much easier to fast. Most people have adapted to a schedule of reading more Quran, listening to lectures or just spending more time with family.

Eid al-Fitr! After Ramadan ends and the new moon is sighted signalling the new month, the Eid festival begins which is three days of celebration and fun for Muslims

A Day in Ramadan

Suhoor: The predawn meal that Muslims eat before the morning prayer before they begin their fast

Days usually vary for everyone, but many spend more time reading more religious scripts, like the Quran, listening or attending lectures, and spending more time with family

Most people don't experience any drastic changes in their usual schedule. Many will still go to work or school, etc. One change is that some people will try to make it to the mosque for the 5 daily prayers if they can.

Iftar: The meal where Muslims break their fast. Typically this meal is at sunset after the dusk prayer.



**What are some of the common
misconceptions
surrounding Ramadan?**

Common Misconceptions

Myth

- Muslims fast even when they are sick
- Ramadan means Muslims are only fasting from food and drink
- There is no reason someone would voluntarily fast for a whole day

Reality

- Not all Muslims are fasting during Ramadan
- Ramadan is more than just fasting from food and water
- Ramadan carries great spiritual importance

1. Not all Muslims are fasting during Ramadan

- Most scholars agree that elderly, pregnant, nursing or menstruating, people, ill people, and travelers are exempted from fasting
- If a Muslim is not fasting, it does not necessarily mean they do not want to.

2. Ramadan is more than just fasting from food and water

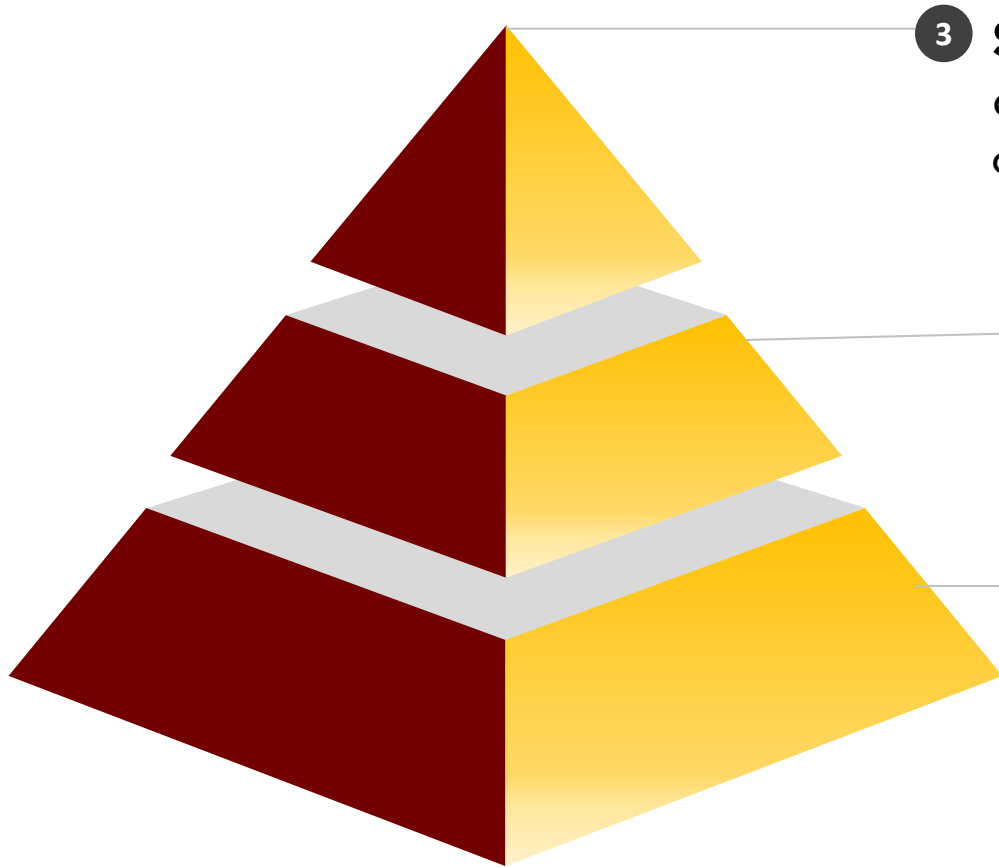
- Ramadan also involves fasting from negative thoughts and actions including sexual activities and cursing

3. Ramadan carries great spiritual importance

- Although understanding poverty may be part of the reason people fast, fasting was ordained on Muslims to help them achieve greater “Taqwa” or God-consciousness.
- By avoiding basic necessities, Muslims are able to concentrate on worship and gratitude.




**What do those who observe
gain from Ramadan?**



3 Spiritual Growth. By praying more, reading the Quran more, and minimizing negative thinking, Ramadan encourages consciousness and worship of Allah (taqwa).

2 Community Development. When Muslims fast as a community during Ramadan, it allows people to get closer to one another and closer to God together.

1 Individual Improvement. During Ramadan, Muslims work on improving themselves by praying, reading, and donating more. Fasting teaches control, sympathy, empathy and sincerity.



**How can healthcare team
members work with patients
during Ramadan?**

Fasting and Health: An Islamic Perspective

“Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may learn piety and righteousness.”

-Quran [2:183]

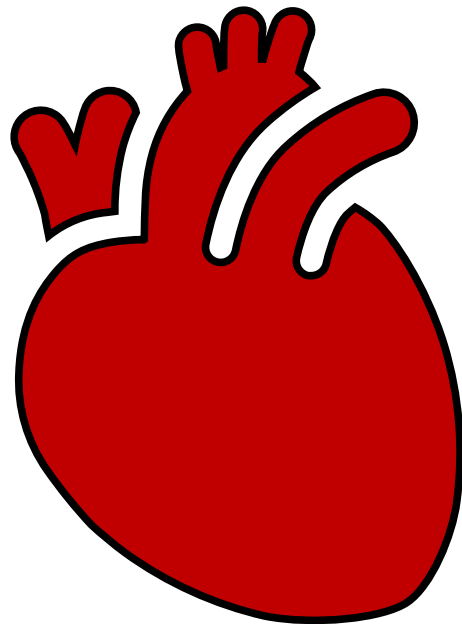
- Fasting for Muslims is an act of morality and conventional reverence
- Perseverance and self-control allows for constant spiritual growth
- The Quran “prescribes” and states that fasting is essential for spiritual health

A Healthcare Team Member's Role

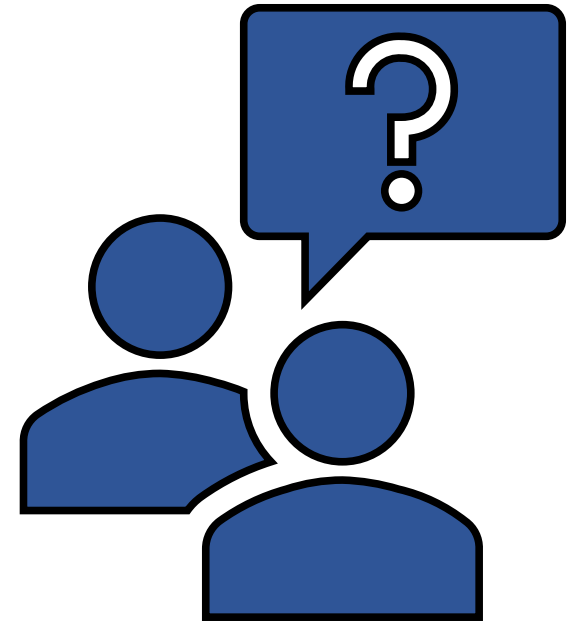
Listening



Understanding



Asking Questions



Narrative Medicine

“[Narrative medicine] is a commitment to understanding patients’ lives, caring for the caregivers, and giving voice to the suffering.”

Rita Charon, MD, PhD

Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

Methods

- Used a feedback and community-based approach
- Our surveys influenced the questions asked to interviewees
- It was a parallel process where surveys and interviews were conducted simultaneously
- Community members were involved in the process

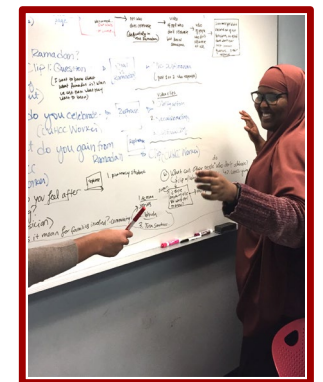
Planning



Surveying

A survey form with handwritten text in black ink. The text discusses the experience of fasting during Ramadan, its health benefits, and the challenges of fasting. The form is divided into sections with headings like 'After fasting, I realized fasting not all day', 'I don't know much about Ramadan as I don't know Arabic', 'Fasting is one of the most healthy things you can do for your body', 'It allows the body to use stored energy instead of constant consumption', 'I can't make you weaker than ever since you are fasting', 'Not good but for religious purpose out of respect', 'Improves it, I think the spiritual component is beneficial for patient's mental health', 'I think it may be a good thing for your body to fast', 'I think Ramadan can be good and potentially bad for a person's health', 'Ramadan overall improves spiritual wellbeing and this can have positive impact on mental and physical wellbeing', and 'Islamization fasting has been shown to improve glucose and fat metabolism, burn fat stores and improve energy'.

Filming



Showing

Editing

Storyboarding

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