



Guidelines on staff support for Muslim patients at end-of-life in an isolated clinical setting such as COVID-19

Throughout the process, it is important that a Muslim's modesty - which is often a deeply spiritual practice in life - be maintained even in death. To the best of your ability, please try to keep the patient's body covered with the available linens.

As death approaches:

1. The patient's linens should be clean, if possible.
2. Using an iPad, navigate to YouTube and search for "Qur'an Recitation", and launch one of the thousands of available playlists. The recited Qur'an is always in Arabic, making it something every Muslim - regardless of background - will be familiar with, and hopefully find meaningful. There might be some cultural differences over which passages from the Qur'an are most appropriate at the end of life, but the team should rest assured knowing there is no 'wrong' or 'inappropriate' passage from the Qur'an. Chapter 36 (*Surah Yasin*) is very common in such times.
3. Family may wish to be 'present' in the room via speakerphone, so they can say relevant prayers. There is a strong belief that a person, if at all possible, die in a state of belief in God by physically affirming their faith through speech. Loved ones will often coach those at the very end of their lives to express and affirm the foundational beliefs of Islam.
4. It is suggested (if possible) to let them lie on their right side facing the *Qiblah* (towards Makkah, North - East from USA)

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Part II

In the moments after the individual's death:

1. As soon as a person dies their eyes should be gently closed.
2. Gently press the chin upward while holding the top of the head. Then place a strip of cotton under the chin and around the head, tying it firmly at the top. (if necessary)
3. Remove any jewelry such as rings, necklaces, bracelets and nose studs. (It is especially important to remove rings before swelling occurs).
4. Straighten the limbs carefully and gently. If they will not straighten (i.e. due to a stroke) do not force them, as this could cause breakage.
5. The face should be turned towards *Qiblah* (towards the right if possible)
6. Place the toes together and bind (if necessary) the ankles carefully.
7. Do not cut nails or remove unwanted hair from the dead body.
8. The body should be covered by a *tahir* (clean) sheet until the time of the deceased's bathing.

Further care: Muslims aim to bury their dead as soon as possible, within 24 hours, unless some medical or legal concern demands otherwise. Family will aim to have their funeral home move quickly to secure the release of the deceased.

For further support surrounding the End of Life care of Muslim patients, please call the ***MGH Spiritual Care Department at 617-726-2220*** or page the Spiritual Care Provider (Chaplain) ***on-call @ pager ID 27302.***