INTRODUCTION

*IBCSR Research Review* (IRR) is published by the Institute for the Biocultural Study of Religion, a non-profit research institute dedicated to the scientific study of the biocultural aspects of religion. IRR briefly annotates and furnishes online information about scientific research articles related to brain, behavior, culture, and religion published in English in leading journals. It also lists relevant books. Articles in press are listed without annotation. Annotations for articles aim to supply a preliminary understanding of the methods and results of a research study, or the argument of a paper. Annotations typically furnish more detail for articles in the scientific study of religion related to religion, brain, and behavior, than for articles in the area of spirituality and health, in accordance with IBCSR research priorities.

Articles for this issue were located by searching the following databases: Applied Science and Technology, ASFA Biological Sciences, ATLA Religion Database, General Science, PubMed, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science. The search terms were altruism, god, goddess, meditat*, prayer, relig*, spiritu*, and yoga, tailored to the database being searched. Books were located on Amazon.com. Articles not directly relevant to the scientific study of religion were excluded, as were correspondence and reviews. From a universe of 572 articles, 94 articles have been retained from 55 journals. There are 36 pre-publication citations from 29 journals.

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PART 1: ARTICLES IN RELIGION, BRAIN, AND BEHAVIOR

1.1 SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION: COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE


In a study of subjects with less than 2 years of meditation practice according to the Kundalini yoga or Acem tradition (n=8), functional magnetic resonance imaging during silent mantra meditation revealed activation in the bilateral hippocampus/parahippocampal formations, as has been observed in previous studies with highly experienced meditators. Other areas with significant activation were the bilateral middle cingulate cortex and the bilateral precentral cortex. No activation in the anterior cingulate cortex was found, and only small activation clusters were observed in the prefrontal cortex. The authors conclude that the hippocampus is activated after only moderate meditation practice, and also during different modes of meditation, including relaxation.


Visual attentional processing was examined in adult meditators and non-meditators (total n=96) on behavioral measures of change blindness, concentration, perspective-shifting, selective attention, and sustained inattentive blindness. Results showed that meditators (1) noticed more changes in flickering scenes and noticed them more quickly; (2) counted more accurately in a challenging concentration task; (3) identified a greater number of alternative perspectives in multiple perspectives images; and (4) showed less interference from invalid cues in a visual selective attention task, but (5) did not differ on a measure of sustained inattentive blindness. Researchers
conclude that regular meditation is associated with more accurate, efficient, and flexible visual attentional processing across diverse tasks that have high face validity outside of the laboratory. Furthermore, effects were assessed in a context separate from actual meditation practice, suggesting that meditators' better visual attention is not just immediate, but extends to contexts separate from meditation practice.


Thirty subjects who had a minimum of 6 months experience in meditating were assessed in four sessions, i.e. two meditation and two control sessions in order to study the brainstem auditory-evoked potentials in two meditation states based on consciousness. The two control sessions were: (i) ekagrata, i.e., single-topic lecture on meditation and (ii) cancalata, i.e., non-targeted thinking. The two meditation sessions were: (i) dharana, i.e., focusing on the symbol “OM” and (ii) dhyana, i.e., effortless single-thought state “OM”. All four sessions were recorded on four different days and consisted of three states: pre, during and post. Results showed that the wave V peak latency significantly increased in cancalata, ekagrata and dharana, but no change occurred during the dhyana session.


To determine if there are differences in baseline brain function of experienced meditators compared to non-meditators, researchers evaluated 12 advanced meditators and 14 non-meditators with cerebral blood flow (CBF) SPECT imaging at rest. Images were analyzed with both region of interest and statistical parametric mapping. The CBF of long-term meditators was significantly higher compared to non-meditators in the prefrontal cortex, parietal cortex, thalamus, putamen, caudate, and midbrain. There was also a significant difference in the thalamic laterality with long-term meditators having greater asymmetry. The observed changes associated with long-term meditation appear in structures that underlie the attention network and also those that relate to emotion and autonomic function.

1.2 Scientific Study of Religion: Evolution


The authors present a model that describes the emergence of distinct descendant cultures (i.e., cultural diversification) from a single ancestral culture in the absence of any geographical isolation, using diversification of religions as a conceptual example of a cultural idea that colonizes human hosts. In analogy with the study of the evolution of pathogens or symbionts colonizing animal hosts, they use models for host-pathogen dynamics known from theoretical epidemiology. In these models, religious content colonizes individual humans. Rates of transmission of ideas between humans, i.e., transmission of cultural content, and rates of loss of ideas (loss of belief) are determined by the phenotype of the cultural content, and by interactions between hosts carrying different ideas. Evolutionary theory is used to show that frequency-dependent selection can lead to the emergence of coexisting clusters of different cultural types. The different clusters correspond to different cultural traditions.


The author describes mutualism, cooperation between species, which like altruism evolves by enhancing all participants' inclusive fitness. Mutualism evolves most readily between members of different kingdoms, which pool
complementary abilities for mutual benefit: some of these mutualisms represent major evolutionary innovations. Mutualism cannot persist if cheating annihilates its benefits. In long-term mutualisms, symbioses, at least one party associates with the other nearly all its life. Usually, a larger host harbors smaller symbionts. Cheating is restrained by vertical transmission, partner fidelity, test-based choice of symbionts, or sanctioning nonperforming symbionts. Mutualisms involving brief exchanges persist, however, despite abundant cheating. Both symbioses and brief-exchange mutualisms have transformed whole ecosystems. These mutualisms may be steps towards ecosystems which, like Adam Smith’s ideal economy, serve their members’ common good.


The author asserts that human altruism is an emergent characteristic of human nature that cannot be reduced to any one particular evolutionary explanation, such as that altruism is a façade to cover underlying selfish motives. The evolutionary processes at work in the formation of human nature are not necessarily in conflict with the possibility of altruism; rather, aspects of human nature are uniquely directed toward the care and concern of others. The relationship between altruism, human nature, and evolution can be reimagined by adopting an emergent view of the hierarchy of science and a theological worldview that emphasizes self-renunciation. The investigation of altruism necessitates an approach that analyzes several aspects of altruistic behavior at different levels in the hierarchy of sciences. This research includes the study of evolutionary adaptations, neurological systems, cognitive functions, behavioral traits, and cultural influences. No one level is able to offer a full explanation, but each piece adds a unique dimension to a much larger puzzle.

### 1.3 Scientific Study of Religion: Psychology and Culture


This study tests the deregulation hypothesis of religious market theory in 26 European and Northern American countries by examining differences in religious involvement between and within countries. The deregulation hypothesis predicts that religious involvement is higher in deregulated religious markets, and that countries having deregulated religious markets for a longer period of time will have higher levels of involvement. Multilevel analysis on the stacked European and World Value Surveys of 1981, 1990, 2000, and 2006 show that deregulation fosters church attendance, but duration of deregulation does not increase church attendance. Although the deregulation hypothesis cannot be rejected, the authors conclude that modernization corrodes church attendance to a larger extent than deregulation can stimulate church attendance.


In this review of the interactions of Muslim religious scholars and preachers with the general public on science issues, the author first reviews literalism in its various forms, including the classical Islamic jurisprudential school of Zahirism, widely regarded as bearing the flag of juristic literalism. He then addresses specific science-related issues currently being discussed in literalistic ways, focusing on the practical case of the determination of crescent-based Islamic months and holy occasions, the conceptual issue of evolution (biological and human), and the rule for the consumption of meat by slaughter of animals. Finally, he proposes a constructive alternative to the literalistic mode: the Maqasidi (objectives-based) approach. This rather old method has seen some revival lately, mainly
among Islamic jurists concerned with solving the new issues of modern times, especially for Muslims living in the West, but this approach has not yet been applied to science-related issues. He concludes by showing the main ideas of that method, and their relevance and usefulness to science-related topics.


The study examines the indirect effects of religious fundamentalism on prejudice through cognitive style and fear of invalidity. Undergraduates (n=199) completed measures of religious fundamentalism, homophobia, modern racism, hostile and benevolent sexism, need for cognition, need for structure, preference for consistency, and fear of invalidity. Need for cognition partially mediated the relationship between religious fundamentalism and both homophobia and benevolent sexism. Preference for consistency partially mediated the relationship between religious fundamentalism and hostile sexism. The indirect effect of religious fundamentalism on modern racism through preference for consistency approached statistical significance. The interaction between need for structure and fear of invalidity partially mediated the relationship between religious fundamentalism and both homophobia and hostile sexism, with individuals high in need for structure and low in fear of invalidity having higher religious fundamentalism and prejudice.


Using Ireland, which experienced an economic boom in the mid 1990s, as a case study, the negative association between economic growth and religious practice is examined by testing two competing hypotheses. Secularization theory argues that the cultural changes that accompany economic growth lead to a decline in religious values. As religious values diminish, so does attendance at religious services. An alternative explanation is that economic growth increases individual purchasing power and therefore consumption-related behavior. Consumption supplants religion by providing alternative intermediaries (symbols, infrastructures, and practices) for social behavior, but only marginally affects religious values. Using data from the 1988 to 2005 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), analyses show that the economic boom in Ireland was clearly associated with a decline in religious attendance, while religious values remained stable. The author concludes that in Ireland the consequences of economic growth deviate from the predictions of secularization theory and therefore support the consumption argument.


A response to Voas (below).


Using data from the Youth, Emotional Energy, and Political Violence Survey, the author investigates the relationship between Islamic religiosity and gender egalitarianism among youth in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, devoting special attention to gender differences within countries. Particular dimensions of Islamic religiosity have different effects on gender egalitarianism by group, reflecting social currents in each country’s civic sphere. For young
men in both contexts, orthodoxy and mosque attendance are negatively associated with gender egalitarianism. In contrast, for Egyptian young women self-identified religiosity positively affects gender egalitarianism while for Saudi Arabian women, Islamic religiosity has no effect.


Researchers investigate whether the level of motivation among mathematically gifted adolescents is related to their moral and religious judgment. The sample consists of first-year students (n=20) at a Finnish private and independent boarding school specializing in mathematics. Results indicate that intrinsic goal orientation was related to moral judgment; fear of failure was related to religious judgment; and intrinsic goal orientation played a moderating role between moral and religious judgment.


A total of 1,000 participants completed the Cardiff Beliefs Questionnaire (CBQ), a tool under development that assesses a broad range of currently held beliefs: delusion-like, both bizarre and non-bizarre (DLB); paranormal and religious; and general political/social beliefs. Strong belief in 1 or more DLB was reported by 39% of the participants; moreover, 25% endorsed at least 1 bizarre. Endorsements of DLB were strongly correlated with paranormal and religious beliefs but not general political/social beliefs. Researchers conclude that both bizarre and non-bizarre DLB are frequently found in the general population.


Using experimental survey data from a sample of evangelical Protestant PAC donors, the author manipulated Christian Right activists’ exposure to dissonant messages on immigration reform and capital punishment, and varied the source of these messages. Results indicate that when opposing viewpoints are attributed to a religious leader generally found outside the Christian Right social movement (a mainline Protestant), evangelicals are less tolerant than when attributed to a religious leader sometimes found within the movement (a Catholic). Moreover, the amount of contact with the respective religious group moderates source effects.


A comment on Hirschle (above). While generally approving of Hirschle’s article, Voas notes holds that a stronger argument for his case may be that declining attendance is the cause, rather than the consequence, of declining belief. Further, Hirschle’s view is closer to the secularization hypothesis than he realizes.


In a study of 721 college students from the rural southern Appalachian region of the United States, researchers found that while no forgiveness dimension was predictive of drinking in the first place, Feeling Forgiven by God predicted a decreased likelihood of problematic drinking. Among problematic drinkers (n=126), Feeling Forgiven
by God predicted fewer alcohol-related problems. Forgiveness of Others was not associated with the alcohol-related variables.


This study examines whether organizations that are a “federation of small groups” are better able to monitor members and hold them accountable, thus assuring acceptable levels of commitment on the part of members and screening out “free-riders.” Results of multilevel modeling using data from the 2001 U.S. Congregational Life Survey indicate that cell-based congregations elicit higher levels of financial giving among congregants, net of all other effects, including network density. Moreover, cross-level interactions between the cell-based congregation variable and theological exclusivity as well as attendance are significant and positive. Cell-based congregations provide a context in which individual-level predictors of giving become more robust.


This study examined religion as a possible tool for achieving positive intergroup encounters. A randomized control trial research design was used to study the contribution of religion to the enhancement of positive relations between Jewish and Arab high school students in Israel. The 255 eleventh-grade students were randomly assigned into three groups: encounters based on religious content, encounters based on social content, and a control group. Findings revealed that the religion-based intervention was more effective than the social-based one, which merely slowed down the deteriorating relationships between the groups.

1.4 Scientific Study of Religion: Method & Theory


Research indicates that in the French labor market, after controlling for country of origin and race, a Muslim candidate is 2.5 times less likely to receive a job interview callback than is his or her Christian counterpart. (Researchers used a “matching strategy,” targeting immigrant groups that are divided religiously, with one portion of them being Muslim and another portion, quite similar to the first culturally, economically, and in education, being Christian.) Further, a high-n survey reveals that second-generation Muslim households in France have lower income compared with matched Christian houseolds.


After describing Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics as ontotheology, the author unpacks the metaphysical assumptions of several transhumanist philosophers. He claims that they deploy an ontology of power as well as a kind of theology, as Heidegger used the term. He also describes the way in which this metaphysics begot its own politics and ethic. In order to transcend the human condition, transhumanists must transgress the human.

This study examines the stability of religious preference among people who claim no religious preference in national surveys (i.e., religious nones). Using data from the Faith Matters Study, General Social Survey, and American National Election Study, researchers show that about 30% of religious nones in the first wave of the survey claim an affiliation with a religious group a year later. The percentage of religious nones remained stable in the two waves because a similar number of respondents moved in the opposite direction. Using various measures of religiosity, the authors show that most of these unstable nones report no significant change in religious belief or practice. They term the phrase “liminal nones” for this group, as they stand halfway in and halfway out of a religious identity.


The authors develop a path model of the strictness thesis that investigates and compares how congregational strictness, evangelical theology, demographic characteristics, and denominational identity variously contribute to congregational growth and decline. Using the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (2001), they test this model at the congregational level and find significant support for the mechanisms at the core of the strictness thesis, particularly that even after controlling for the other dynamics mentioned, congregational strictness has both an indirect and a direct positive effect on congregational growth. Further, evangelical theology, fertility, and denominational identity all play important roles in the prediction of growth, lending support for the use of the path model of the strictness to understand congregational growth and decline.
2.1 Spirituality & Health: General Health & Well-Being


Using data from 262 participants who had undergone open heart surgery 30 months earlier, researchers found that preoperative use of prayer for coping, optimism, and hope predicted lower levels of depression at follow-up; subjective religiousness, marital status, and hope predicted lower levels of anxiety at follow-up; reverence in religious contexts, preoperative mental health symptoms, and medical comorbidity predicted poorer adjustment. Several other religious factors had no long-term influences.


This literature review evaluates different domains relative to the relation between addiction, religion, and psychiatric treatment. Spirituality as a protective or precipitating factor for substance use and as a key component of recovery is debated. Illustrations of its potential and limitations as a component of treatment are presented. Types of investigation and integration of this dimension in an eventual therapeutic process strictly respecting the needs and specificities of each one is discussed.


In a controlled trial at a US Veterans Administration homeless residential rehabilitation program, study participants were randomly assigned to acupuncture, relaxation response or usual care groups. Both acupuncture and the relaxation response interventions were well received by the veterans with high intervention attendance rates (75% and 80%, respectively). The acupuncture group had significantly greater reductions in craving and anxiety levels and greater improvements in the spirituality dimension of quality of life, while the relaxation response group had significantly greater reductions in anxiety level and greater improvements in mental health and spirituality dimensions of quality of life than usual care. The two intervention groups had no significant difference in any outcome measures.

doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2010.06.001.

This paper reports on a qualitative study about the spiritual transformation of 11 female stroke survivors in Hong Kong using a naturalistic inquiry approach. After an initial period of despair and disequilibrium, participants drew on social/environmental resources and personal spiritual resources to reconnect to spiritually-rich beliefs and practices. The stroke ultimately resulted in transformation of the loss and creation of a resilient post-stroke self. Implications suggest that the spiritual transformation process is complex in a diverse society and social care professionals do well to recognize and support culturally relevant spiritual expressions.
Eleven patient articles, and eight with healthcare providers, were included in this literature review, incorporating data from 178 patients and 116 healthcare providers, mainly from elderly White and Judaean-Christian origin patients with cancer. Spirituality principally focused on relationships, rather than just meaning making, and was given as a relationship. Affirmative relationships supported patients, enabling them to respond to their spiritual needs. The authors note that the engagement of family caregivers in spiritual care appears to be underutilized.

doi:10.1007/s11864-010-0129-x.

The authors reviewed research on mind-body treatments in oncology contexts, including relaxation therapies, biofeedback, meditation and hypnosis, yoga, art and music therapy, tai chi, and qigong. Although studies are not always methodologically sound and results mixed, a growing number of well-designed studies provide convincing evidence that mind-body techniques are beneficial adjuncts to cancer treatment.

doi:10.1007/s12160-010-9218-0.

Utilizing data from a 2002 national survey (n=9,837) researchers found that women who never attended services had over two times greater odds of reporting HIV risk factors than those attending weekly or more after adjusting for age and race/ethnicity and over 60% greater after adjusting for multiple confounders; no significant association was seen in men. Mainline Protestants had lower odds of reporting risk factors than those with no affiliation. No significant independent associations were found with importance of religion.


This study examined the association of religiosity, sexual education and family structure with risky sexual behaviors among adolescents and young adults. The nationally representative sample, from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, included 3,168 women and men ages 15-21 years. Those who viewed religion as very important, had frequent church attendance, and held religious sexual attitudes were 27-54% less likely to have had sex and had significantly fewer sex partners than peers. Participants whose formal and parental sexual education included abstinence and those from two-parent families were 15% less likely to have had sex and had fewer partners.


A study of the change in the critical flicker fusion (CFF) after a yogic visual concentration practice (n=30) revealed that the CFF showed a statistically significant increase after the yoga practice (trataka) from before. The control session did not produce a statistically significant change in the CFF.

Data from the National Demographic and Health Survey in Brazil demonstrate that religiously affiliated female adolescents are less likely to have had a child during their teen years when compared with their unaffiliated peers. These protective effects are quite robust for adolescents who claim a Pentecostal affiliation. Results also demonstrate that teens who attend worship services frequently are significantly less likely to have had a child.


Researchers investigated the effect of two yoga-based relaxation techniques, cyclic meditation (CM) and supine rest (SR), using the six letter cancellation task (SLCT). Participants were 208 students between 13 and 16 years old. After both yoga-based relaxation techniques, total and net scores on the SLCT were significantly increased, although the magnitude of change was more after CM than after SR in the net. The net score change in the CM session was significantly larger than the change in the SR, whereas, there was no significant change in the wrong cancellation score.


The current study explored the relationship between religious coping and cumulative health risk associated with health behavior patterns in a sample of 256 Latina and Caucasian female caregivers of elderly relatives with dementia. Findings revealed that negative religious coping was significantly associated with increased cumulative health risk. Positive religious coping was predictive of decreased cumulative health risk among Latina caregivers but not among Caucasians. Negative religious coping was significantly associated with both an increased likelihood for weight gain and increased dietary restriction. Positive religious coping was associated with decreased likelihood for weight gain in Latinas.


One hundred and two pregnant women between 18 and 20 weeks of gestation were recruited from the obstetric units in Bangalore and were randomly assigned to two groups of yoga (n = 51) and control (n = 51). The yoga group received integrated yoga while control group received standard antenatal exercises. Analysis showed significant improvements in the yoga group quality of life compared to the control in the physical, psychological, social, and environmental domains. In tests of interpersonal relations, the yoga group showed significant improvements in ‘Expressed Inclusion’ and ‘Wanted Control’ domains compared to the control group.


To test the effectiveness of an integrated yoga therapy program for chronic migraine treatment, 70 participants were randomly assigned to yoga therapy or standard management. After 12 weeks, the intervention group experienced
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statistically significant changes in self-perceived pain frequency, pain intensity, pain duration, functional status, medication used and depression. These differences retained their significance at the 6-month follow-up.


The authors review appropriate uses of meditation for pediatric patients in a variety of contexts.


Using data from the Health and Retirement Study, the author examines the relationship between adult mortality and religious affiliation. Socioeconomic status explains some but not all of the mortality difference. While Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and black Protestants benefit from favorable attendance patterns; attendance (or lack of) at services explains much of the higher mortality of those with no religious preference. Health behaviors do not mediate the relationship between mortality and religion, except among evangelical Protestants.


Researchers evaluated a 12-14 week yoga program provided to primigravidas in the third trimester of pregnancy and found that women who took part in the prenatal yoga program (n=43) reported significantly fewer pregnancy discomforts than the control group (n=45) at 38-40 weeks of gestation. The subjects who participated in the yoga program exhibited higher outcome and self-efficacy expectancies during the active stage of labor and the second stage of labor compared with the control group.


In a convenience sample of 323 outpatients with a diagnosis of cancer in university and affiliated cancer centers in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Switzerland (Italian speaking area), researchers found that the majority of patients (79.3%) referred to being supported by their spirituality/faith throughout their illness. Significant differences were found between the spirituality and non-spirituality groups in terms of education, coping styles, and psychological morbidity. Spirituality was significantly correlated with fighting spirit, fatalism, and avoidance coping styles, and negatively correlated with education, depression and anxiety.


A significant negative association between religious participation and cognitive impairment was found among the oldest-old who had taken the Chinese Healthy Longevity Survey, and much of the association was mediated by positive psychological feelings and leisure activities. Women reported higher proportion of religious participation, but the cognitive benefits of religious participation were stronger for men. Findings indicate that (a) religious participation is significantly correlated with cognitive functioning in part because the religious oldest-old are more likely to be optimistic and happy and engage in more cognitively stimulating activities; (b) there might be gender
differences in religious participation such that the oldest-old men may engage in religious activities that are particularly relevant to cognitive functioning.

2.2 SPIRITUALITY & HEALTH: MENTAL HEALTH


In this study, researchers explored the relationship of spiritual beliefs and involvement with anger and stress in early adolescents. Early adolescents (n=53) completed the Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale, the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory, and the Perceived Stress Scale. Contrary to expectations, spirituality was significantly and positively related to anger and stress.


Data from 103 women enrolled in the original Lehigh Valley Perinatal Loss Project, and who were followed-up for at least 1 year, were evaluated for the impact of initial religious practices and beliefs on the course and severity of grief. Religious practices corresponding to standard scales of religiosity and agreement with specific beliefs were rated by the women on a Likert scale of 1-5. Neither agreement with statements corresponding to extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity or to positive religious coping, nor frequency of religious service attendance, was predictive of follow-up scores on the Perinatal Grief Scale. Religious struggle, agreement with statements classified as negative religious coping, and continued attachment to the baby were all associated with more severe grief.


Researchers piloted a 6-week group curriculum for providing mindfulness training to obese individuals, called Mindful Eating and Living (MEAL). Data was collected at three time points: baseline, completion of intervention (6 weeks), and 3-month follow-up (12 weeks). Following the intervention, compared to baseline, participants showed statistically significant increases in measures of mindfulness and cognitive restraint around eating, and statistically significant decreases in weight, eating disinhibition, binge eating, depression, perceived stress, physical symptoms, negative affect, and C-reactive protein.


This article considers contributions of religious commitment and spiritual practice to well-being and cognitive-developmental theoretical models and related bodies of empirical and clinical research regarding religious and spiritual development across the life cycle, with particular attention to questions related to positive adult development.

Researchers assessed the impact of yoga intervention in a group of Israeli school children residing in the region affected by the Second Lebanon War (n=122). Based on questionnaires completed by the children and their teachers, researchers found that the teachers reported many statistically significant improvements in the children’s concentration, mood and ability to function under pressure, although the children themselves were unaware of any change in their behavior. Enjoyment was reported by all participants, and almost all expressed an interest in continuing to practice yoga during school hours.


Drawing on literature on coping strategies, the authors found that Muslims indeed tend to use an interpersonally oriented (collective) coping style, such as seeking social support or turning to family members, when dealing with adversity, whereas Christians are more likely to employ intrapersonally oriented (individualistic) strategies, such as cognitive restructuring or reframing the event, when facing comparable scenarios.


doi:10.1348/014466609X485025.

This study explores how a group of young British Muslim gay men (BMGM; n=12) of Pakistani background in non-gay affirmative religious contexts understood and defined their sexual, religious, and ethnic identities, focusing upon the negotiation and construction of these identities and particularly upon strategies employed for coping with identity threat. Analysis of interviews reveals four superordinate themes, entitled ‘I’m gay because …’: making sense of gay identity, ‘It’s all about temptation’: invoking religious discourses to explain sexual identity, ‘Going against God’: fear of divine retribution, ‘It’s easier to be gay here’: external attributions and British national identity.


Results from interviews with 295 Latin American immigrants living in Barcelona (Spain) showed an inverse relationship between religiosity and depression symptoms, but only in women. Likewise, in women, the sense of spiritual fulfillment had mediating value in buffering the relationship between stress and depression symptoms. This mediating value of spiritual fulfillment was not observed in men. For both genders religiosity was inversely related with stress. In addition, it was observed that the sense of religiosity decreases as the time since immigration passes.


Dimensions of religiosity (Inclusion of Transcendence and Symbolic Interpretation) were assessed in two adult Hungarian samples (n=330; n=437) and associations were assessed with presence of meaning (Studies 1 and 2) and search for meaning (Study 2), controlling for personality traits (Study 2). Inclusion of Transcendence was positively related to presence of meaning, and Symbolic Interpretation was positively related to search for meaning. Differing patterns of relations across explicit and implicit measures of presence of meaning suggested potentially
important distinctions between whether people believe and how they believe. Together, results show that life appears more meaningful when religiosity is complex and open.


In a survey of 318 undergraduate rehabilitation interns, researchers found that religiosity, problem-focused coping and general self-efficacy had significant positive correlation with satisfaction with clinical internship. Among personality dimensions, openness, agreement and consciousness had significant positive correlation with satisfaction with clinical experience, and neuroticism had significant negative correlation with satisfaction with clinical experience. The results of regression analysis demonstrated that religiosity and self-efficacy had important roles in the prediction of satisfaction with clinical experience in all the rehabilitation intern students of three disciplines (physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language pathology).


After administering mind, body and spirit survey instruments to yoga students, and college students, researchers found that five indicators to measure mental wellness were significantly different between yoga practitioners and college students. On three of these five measures, college students reported more mental wellness than yoga practitioners. College students reported maintaining stability in their life more often than yoga practitioners as well as more often experiencing satisfying interpersonal relationships. College students were also more likely than yoga practitioners to report being tolerant of others, whether or not they approved of their behavior or beliefs. Yoga practitioners were more likely than college students to report having strong morals and healthy values as well as the ability to express their feelings and consider the feelings of others. Yoga practitioners were more likely than college students to report expressing their spirituality appropriately and in healthy ways. Yoga practitioners were also more likely to report experiencing happiness within.


In the development of a spiritual distress assessment tool (SDAT), four dimensions of spirituality (Meaning, Transcendence, Values, and Psychosocial Identity) and their corresponding needs were defined. A formalized assessment procedure to both identify and subsequently score unmet spiritual needs and spiritual distress was developed. Face validity and acceptability in clinical practice were confirmed by chaplains involved in the focus groups. Preliminary research indicates that the SDAT appears to be a clinically acceptable instrument to assess spiritual distress in elderly hospitalised persons.


Researchers compared attendees of a spirituality-based therapeutic group (n=20) with non-attendees (n=20) and found that for the former spirituality status was significantly correlated with self-efficacy for positive symptoms,
negative symptoms and social functioning. Further, group attendees were significantly more hopeful than non-attendees and hopefulness was significantly associated with degree of spirituality status.


Using a case study, the author describes a theory wherein similar meaning themes and similar processes about relationships are articulated by adults across widely disparate domains of behavior. Whether the person is consciously describing early relationships with parental figures, unconsciously acting them out in current relationships, experiencing relationships with God or the Transcendent, or acting on the basis of relational delusions during psychotic episodes, his or her experienced relational reality seems to be filtered through a single, coherent, personally unique spiritual, existential, and epistemological relational lens.


Using 2000 census records of 1,722,456 (46.0%) Catholics, 1,565,452 (41.8%) Protestants and 454,397 (12.2%) individuals with no religious affiliation, and controlling for age, marital status, education, type of household, language and degree of urbanization, researchers found that suicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants were 19.7 in Catholics (1,664 suicides), 28.5 in Protestants (2,158 suicides) and 39.0 in those with no affiliation (882 suicides). After further analysis, researchers concluded that in Switzerland, the protective effect of a religious affiliation appears to be stronger in Catholics than in Protestants, stronger in older than in younger people, stronger in women than in men, and particularly strong for assisted suicides.


The authors describe Sexual Identity Therapy, which was developed to assist individuals who are seeking to address potential conflicts between religious and sexual identities by focusing on personal congruence. To facilitate this process, the practice of mindfulness is applied to assist individuals with same-sex attraction to become nonjudgmentally aware of their thoughts and feelings related to same-sex attraction such that they are able to experience their attractions in an open and honest manner without feeling compelled to either dismiss or augment these attractions.


After analysis of results from the Israeli Social Survey (2006), researchers found a significant effect of religiosity on happiness. With respect to Jewish families the impact of family size on both life and financial satisfaction seems to vary with religiosity. For Arab families we did not find this effect. First-generation immigrants are less happy than second-generation immigrants, while there is no significant difference between second-generation families and native families. The effect of the Lebanon war is much less than expected.

This article focuses on the cultural, ethical, and spiritual implications of natural disasters from the survivors’ perspective. In this context, a disaster is defined as an unforeseen event that causes great damage, destruction, and human suffering, which in turn overwhelms the response capacity of local communities, oftentimes necessitating external requests for assistance on a national or international level.


The authors outline relevant theory concerning several specific religious coping styles, then test hypotheses regarding divorce and depression using data from a large sample of members of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Results indicate that several types of religious coping bear a direct inverse association with depressive symptoms and also buffer the deleterious effects of divorce on this outcome.

2.3 Spirituality & Health: Method and Theory


This qualitative descriptive study explored Muslim religious leaders’ perception, knowledge and attitudes towards AIDS, AIDS prevention and their attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The study results showed that Muslim religious leaders (n=20) do not perceive AIDS as a major health problem in Jordan, and that following the Islamic values lowers the risky behaviors. The religious leaders reflected varied responses to PLWHA but they agreed that they have responsibilities towards the prevention of HIV/AIDS, and that sex education contributes to healthy behaviors, and consequently to the prevention of HIV transmission.


This article explains the value of Qur’anic metaphors as therapeutic tools in counseling. In accordance with the fact that Muslims rely on Qur’anic verses when answering the larger questions of life, “metaphor therapy” comes across as a technique that counselors can employ with Muslim clients. Although several authors have suggested the use of therapeutic metaphors from various religious texts in a broad manner, relatively little has been published on the application of metaphors from the Qur’an in counseling.


The authors describe the 2006 project undertaken by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine’s Interest Group on Spirituality, which identified six knowledge, nine skills, and four attitude core spiritual care competencies for use in training, and linked these to competencies of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.
In addition, they identified three global competencies for use in promotion and graduation criteria. The article describe the results of this process, and make recommendations for implementation.


In this letter to the editor, the authors report on an anonymous survey given to perinatal women at intake at a psychiatric day hospital over an 11-month period. Of the 250 pregnant and postpartum women who completed the survey, a relatively large proportion, 83 percent (n=207), reported interest in trying prenatal yoga. Among the 65 women seeking care specifically for antenatal depression, 57 (88%) expressed interest. Reducing stress, depression, and anxiety were some of most common reasons for interest in prenatal yoga, in addition to benefitting from exercise and increased flexibility. Most women who expressed interest in prenatal yoga had never participated in a single yoga class (n = 128; 62%), suggesting that this approach may be acceptable to those who are new to yoga practice.

Bell, David, Mark Harbinson, Gary Toman, Vivienne Crawford & Harold Cunningham. 2010. Wholeness of healing: an innovative Student-Selected Component introducing United Kingdom medical students to the spiritual dimension in healthcare. Southern Medical Journal 103(12). 1204-1209. doi:10.1097/SMJ.0b013e3181f968ce

The authors describe the Student Selected Component (SSC) which was designed to equip United Kingdom medical students to engage in whole-person care. Following the educational process, students reported greater awareness of the benefit of clinicians engaging in care of the “whole person” rather than “the disease.” Contributions of other professions to the healing process were acknowledged, and students felt better equipped for discussion of spiritual issues with patients.


This paper examines the implementation of spiritual-care training programs and the challenge of integrating program graduates in the healthcare services. The information was collected through in-depth interviews with 12 students and graduates and the directors of the three training programs. The interviewees emphasized the importance of practical experience, although many of them encountered some degree of antagonism during their training or placement. Continuation of personal counseling and supervision after the conclusion of the program is also essential.


In this study, hope theory was extended to include the locus-of-hope dimension, with both internal and external agency in generating plans for pursuing goals. External agents may be one’s family, peers, or a supernatural/spiritual being. The locus-of-hope dimensions were defined and validated in two studies with Filipino university students. Study 1 used confirmatory factor analysis to test hypothesized models of the locus-of-hope dimension. Study 2 used confirmatory factor analysis to further validate the model, then used regression analysis to show that the internal and external locus-of-hope dimensions were associated with individual-level individualism and collectivism, respectively.

The present study provides a factor analytical evaluation of Ladd and Spilka’s Inward, Outward and Upward Prayer Scale, which measures what respondents think about while praying, and Poloma and Pendleton’s Measure of Prayer Type, which measures four different dimensions of prayer as well as degree of intimacy with the divine. After administration to a sample of 518 Irish respondents, the total scales and subscales were found to be reliable, though confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the hypothesized factor structures were a less than optimal fit of the data, while correlational analysis revealed a conceptual overlap between the measures.


Researchers enrolled 501 individuals (study 1: 61% yoga) and in a second study 135 individuals (study 2: 71% Yoga). A questionnaire to assess the ‘inner correspondence’ was applied to the participants, along with standardized instruments assessing life satisfaction, patient satisfaction, symptom score, and mindfulness. Analysis (study 1) of the 12-item test instrument pointed to a 3-factor solution with one major scale (Inner Correspondence with Practices/Easiness, and two minor scales with a weak internal consistency. To improve the quality of the main scale, the authors added 8 new items (study 2: 71% Yoga) and confirmed a 12-item single factor which explains 64% of variance, i.e., Inner Correspondence/Peaceful Harmony (ICPH) with practices.


This paper is a step toward laying a new conceptual and psychotherapeutic approach with Latina/o clients, specifically those of Mexican American and Mexican backgrounds. It is argued that a psychospiritual belief system is at the base of these populations, and that a culturally consistent framework must appropriately address theory, skills, and practice. Mestizo spirituality is presented and described, and a review of those forces that have impacted this understanding is offered. Key concepts, therapeutic goals, and relationship assumptions of the model, two case examples, application, and limitations of this framework are provided.


A systematic literature review was conducted to review and evaluate trends in measuring R/S in adolescent health outcomes research. In this review a total of 100 articles met criteria for inclusion. Relatively few (n=15) included adolescent-specific R/S measures or items accounting for developmentally relevant issues such as parental religiosity or age-appropriate language.


Researchers compared mind-body use between adults with and without common neurological conditions (regular headaches, migraines, back pain with sciatica, strokes, dementia, seizures or memory loss) using the 2007
National Health Interview Survey of 23,393 sampled American adults. Adults with common neurological conditions used mind-body therapies more frequently than those without. Deep breathing exercises, meditation and yoga were used most frequently.


In a literature survey, the authors analyzed data by religious affiliation, discipline, geography and date. We found 377 peer-reviewed articles; most were categorized as family planning (129), sexual behavior (81), domestic violence (39), pregnancy (46), HIV/AIDS (71), and STDs (61). Most research occurred in North America (188 articles), Africa (52), and Europe (47). Article frequency increased over time, from 3 articles in 1980 to 38 articles in 2008.


The author argues that suffering is experienced within one’s lived context, which can then be a resource for spiritual care that could reconstruct the world that has fallen apart through a suffering experience. He holds that spiritual care is an intervention into the predicaments of human suffering and its mandate is to facilitate certain direction and a meaningful order through which experiences and expectations are rejoined.


The author describes the history of the clinical pastoral movement, including its early leaders: Anton Boisen, Elwood Worcester, Helen Flanders Dunbar, and Richard Cabot. They formed the roots of the contemporary dialogue between religion and psychiatry. This essay was first presented as a Grand Rounds lecture at The New York Presbyterian Hospital, Payne Whitney Westchester in the Department of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College.


The author makes the case for health care providers responding to the call of duty during catastrophic events to be familiar with resources available to guide decision making and the provision of care, and integration of local efforts with teams of professionals who have specialized disaster response training from international agencies is the most appropriate approach to providing ethically sound, spiritually sensitive, and culturally appropriate care to disaster victims. In addition, everything possible should be done to ease spiritual suffering during a disaster.


The great variety of meditation techniques found in different contemplative traditions presents a challenge when attempting to create taxonomies based on the constructs of contemporary cognitive sciences. In the current issue of Consciousness and Cognition, Travis and Shear add ‘automatic self-transcending’ to the previously proposed categories of ‘focused attention’ and ‘open monitoring’, and suggest characteristic EEG bands as the defining
criteria for each of the three categories. Accuracy of current taxonomies and potential limitations of EEG measurements as classifying criteria are discussed.


Analysis of data from 14,924 Christians, 4337 Muslims, 656 Sikhs, 1197 Hindus and 2682 people reporting not identifying with any religion with different ethnic backgrounds, who were interviewed as part of the Health Survey for England in either 1999 or 2004, adjusted for age, gender and socioeconomic status and periodicity, revealed an independent role for religion, with risks for the different health indicators varying between people with the same ethnic, but different religious, identifications.


Using the philosophies of Frege and James, this essay argues that the terms “religion” and “spirituality” denote the same concept, a concept that is identified with the Peace/meaning subscale of the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy (FACIT). The term “Religions” denotes the concept under which specific religious systems are categorized. The author holds that muddling these concepts causes researchers to make claims that their findings do not support, and the paper ends by suggesting that future research must include universal measures of the concept of religion/spirituality in order to investigate further the role of interventions in the spiritual care of people living with cancer.


The authors describe “spiritual reminiscence,” a way of telling a life story with emphasis on meaning. A total of 113 older adults with dementia, living in aged-care facilities, participated in this study. They were allocated to small groups for spiritual reminiscence, to meet weekly over 6 weeks or 6 months. Quantitative data were gathered using a behavioural scale before and after each spiritual reminiscence session. This paper examines aspects of the qualitative data around the themes of ‘meaning in life’ and ‘vulnerability and transcendence’.


A mailed, cross-sectional survey was completed by 614 cancer survivors identified through the Pennsylvania Cancer Registry. Although large proportions of individuals reported that having cancer had positively affected their spiritual well-being (e.g., 40.3% experienced highly positive spiritual changes, 68% felt a high sense of purpose, 75.9% reported being very hopeful), some individuals experienced negative spiritual change (36.1%) and continued to experience high levels of uncertainty (27.2%). In multivariate analyses, those survivors who felt spiritual life became more important, or experienced positive changes resulting from the cancer experience, were more likely to use CAM than those who stated otherwise.

The aim of this descriptive study was to examine the relationships between identity styles of the Berzonsky model and religiosity. Iranian undergraduate students (n=359) were assessed using Berzonsky Identity Styles Inventory (ISI), Islamic Orientation Questionnaire, and the Duriez Post Critical Belief Scale (PCBS). Based on correlation analysis, most religiosity variables were positively related to informational and normative identity styles and negatively related to diffuse/avoidant identity style. Also, stepwise regression analysis showed that religious belief and practice was predicted by informational and normative identity styles, inclusion of transcendence was predicted by normative and diffuse/avoidant identity styles (negatively) and symbolic processing was positively predicted by informational identity style.


The authors translated the Sense of Coherence Scale, Health Index, Brief Religious Coping Scale and Spiritual Perspective Scale into the Persian language and used the instruments with a sample of healthy Iranian people (n=375). Psychometric tests showed validity and reliability. Sense of coherence was the strongest predictor of well-being (Health Index scores) both at baseline and 1 month later.


The 2 main roles of the psychotherapist involve identifying and understanding the client’s problems/strengths and treating problems. Suggestions are offered to guide addressing or avoiding religious beliefs in both roles.


Researchers studied whether Mormons could be distinguished from non-Mormons by their appearance, and investigated the basis for this effect. In the laboratory, individuals could distinguish between the two groups significantly better than chance guessing from their full faces and faces without hair, with eyes and mouth covered, without outer face shape, and inverted 180°; but not from isolated features (i.e., eyes, nose, or mouth). Perceivers’ estimations of their accuracy did not match their actual accuracy.


This paper examines how theological concepts affect the way Quakers approach mental health care, historically and in contemporary times. The author describes the unity of psychological and spiritual care, inspired by George Fox, that was first apparent in the work of the Religious Society of Friends asylum reforms in the nineteenth century, and which matured during the early twentieth century as they entered into dialogue with Jung and Jungian psychology and continue to inspire Quaker pastoral care models today.


The article points out the limitations in surveys measuring religiosity and spirituality using the measures developed in Christian or Western contexts, using Japan as an example. The author explains how Japanese concepts of
religion different from typically Western concepts, leading to potential confusion when measuring religiosity or other markers of religious life.


This paper proposes a third meditation-category, automatic self-transcending, to extend the dichotomy of focused attention and open monitoring proposed by Lutz. Automatic self-transcending includes techniques designed to transcend their own activity. This contrasts with focused attention, which keeps attention focused on an object; and open monitoring, which keeps attention involved in the monitoring process. Each category was assigned EEG bands, based on reported brain patterns during mental tasks, and meditations were categorized based on their reported EEG. Focused attention, characterized by beta/gamma activity, included meditations from Tibetan Buddhist, Buddhist, and Chinese traditions. Open monitoring, characterized by theta activity, included meditations from Buddhist, Chinese, and Vedic traditions. Automatic self-transcending, characterized by alpha1 activity, included meditations from Vedic and Chinese traditions. Between categories, the included meditations differed in focus, subject/object relation, and procedures. These findings shed light on the common mistake of averaging meditations together to determine mechanisms or clinical effects.


A reply to Josipovic (above). The authors agree with Josipovic that a fundamental differentiating feature of meditation techniques is whether they remain within the dualistic subject-object cognitive structure, or they transcend this structure to reveal an underlying level of non-dual awareness. Further discussion is needed to delineate the basic non-dual experience in meditation, where all phenomenal content is absent, from the more advanced experience of non-duality in daily life, where phenomenal content is obviously present as well. In this discussion, it is important to recognize that the experience-object relation makes the experience dual or non-dual, rather than the nature of the object experienced.
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4.1 SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION, BRAIN, AND BEHAVIOR


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