

Caring for the Whole Patient: Good Medicine for Patients & Professionals?

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A bit of perspective...

Disclosures

Response

Things You Like?
Things You Don't Like?
Concerns?
Questions?

Professional Views

The majority (75%) of surveyed physicians agree that religion and spirituality is important to patients for coping and for giving them a positive state of mind

Curlin FA et al. Physicians' Observations and Interpretations of the Influence of Religion and Spirituality on Health. Arch Intern Med. 2007;167:649-654

Patient Satisfaction

Patients who had discussions of religion & spiritual concerns:

more likely to rate their care at the highest..., *regardless* of whether or not they said they had desired such a discussion.

-J Gen Intern Med. 2011 Nov;26(11):1265-71

Patient Views

- * “Spiritual care is frequently desired by patients in serious illness as part of medical care, with estimates ranging from **50% to 96%** of patients wanting spiritual care.”
- * “Spiritual needs are infrequently addressed in medical care of seriously ill patients, with patient-reported spiritual care from medical teams ranging from **9% to 51%**.”

Balboni et al, JAMA 2022, 328, 2, 184-197

The Faith Factor

Good Medicine for Patients?

Religiousness is related to:

- * Significantly less depressive symptoms
- * better quality of life
- * less cognitive impairment
- * less perceived pain.

Clinicians should consider taking a spiritual history and ensuring that spiritual needs are addressed among older patients in rehabilitation settings.

-J Rehabil Med. 2011 Mar;43(4):316-22

A 2 year longitudinal study of elderly hospitalized patients...

PATIENTS WHO:

- * wondered whether God had abandoned them
- * questioned Gods love for them
- * decided the devil made this happen
- * felt punished by God for their lack of devotion

→ **16%-28% higher mortality during a 2-year period following hospital discharge.**

Arch Int Medicine 2001

Whole Person Care

Costs of not being done?

EOL costs were higher when patients reported that their spiritual needs were inadequately supported

Overall - \$4947 vs \$2833, $P = .03$

Minorities - \$6533 vs \$2276, $P = .02$

High religious copers - \$6344 vs \$2431, $P = .005$

Cancer 2011; 117:5383–91

Whole Person Care

Costs of not being done?

Despite increasing data linking spirituality with improved health outcomes, including among groups for whom spirituality has a salient role, such as US older persons and Black and Latinx populations, such issues remain largely outside standard considerations regarding health.

Failure to consider these aspects may have potential adverse effects, including undermining person-centered care.

Balboni et al, JAMA 2022, 328, 2, 184-197

The Joint Commission

... the spirituality of patients should be respected, assessed and attended to in ways that are important to them.

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.
Joint Commission Guide to Allied Health Professionals. Oakbrook Terrace, IL: Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations; 2010.

Spiritual Care is an Ethical Responsibility

- * In its palliative care resolution, **WHO** notes that it is the **‘ethical obligation of all health care professionals** and all health care systems to address spiritual issues of patients.’
- * The **American College of Physicians** cites that it is the **ethical duty of all physicians to attend to all dimensions of suffering psychosocial and spiritual, as well as physical.**
- * **Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC)** also supports this position.

- Puchalski et al. 2019

Discussion

Thoughts?
Concerns?
Questions?

Appropriate Whole Person Care How?

Spiritual History Questions

1. With this illness, what keeps you going?
What is your source of strength?
2. Has any of this been scary/stressful for you?
How?
3. How has this illness affected the way you see yourself?
4. How has this illness affected the way you view and interact with God?
5. What in your life is most meaningful to you?

Whole Person Care How?

Whole Person Care

Approach your patients with:

Permission

Respect

Sensitivity

Taking a SpHx?

Good Medicine for Provider?

Caring about the patient is also what gives joy and fulfillment to the practice of medicine & is why many of us chose this profession.

Its absence, especially in this pressured health care environment, can rapidly lead to dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and burnout.

Practicing whole-person medicine is the best kind of care both for those who receive it and those who give it.

-So Med J 2004 Dec; 97 (12): 1194-1200

Next Steps

Interest in the relationship between spirituality, religion, and clinical care has increased in the last 15 years, but clinicians need more concrete guidance about this topic.

-Chest. 2009 Jun;135(6):1634-42



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Q & A

Small Group Discussion

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