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Relationships among Health and Spiritual Beliefs, Religious Practices, and Congregational Support in Individuals with Cancer

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ABSTRACT

To assess relationships among physical health, mental health, spiritual experiences, religious practices, and perceived congregational support for individuals with cancer. Design: A cross-sectional analysis of 56 individuals from outpatient settings (25 with cancer, 31 healthy controls). Measures: Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMRS; [1]); Medical Outcomes Scale-Short Form 36 (SF-36) General Health Perception (GHP) and General Mental Health (GMH) scales. Results: Participants with cancer reported significantly higher levels of *Daily Spiritual Experiences and Religious Support* on the BMMRS than the Healthy Controls. No BMMRS subscales were significantly correlated with the SF-36, although the BMMRS subscales had larger correlations with the SF-36 GMH scale (mean = 0.23; range = 0.14 - 0.37) than the GHP scale (mean = 0.16; range = 0.01 - 0.33). Conclusions: Individuals with cancer rely on spiritual beliefs and congregations support more than healthy controls. Statistical trends indicate that individuals with cancer use spiritual, religious, and congregational support factors primarily to assist them in emotion-ally coping with their disease, rather than to improve physical health.

KEYWORDS

Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality; BMMRS; Religion; Spirituality; Health; Cancer

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