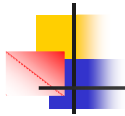


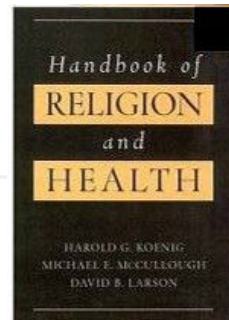
Religion and Health: Research and Theory

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Religion and Health

- Important Terms
 - Religion
 - Physical Health
 - Mental Health
- Most of this research is correlational



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Religion and Physical Health

- “Religion” is related to . . .
 - Lower mortality rates.
 - Lower blood pressure.
 - Less coronary disease.
 - Greater reported physical well-being.
 - Greater ability to cope with disease/illness.
 - Fewer health-risk behaviors.

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Religion and Physical Health

- Recent review of religion and health
- Powell, Shahabi, & Thoresen (2003)
- Evaluated 9 “hypotheses” about the relationship between religion and health
- Rated with 5 levels:
 - Persuasive
 - Reasonable
 - Some
 - Consistent Failure
 - Inadequate

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Religion and Physical Health

Relationship	Evidence
1. Religious attendance and death	Persuasive
2. Protects cardiovascular disease	Some
3. Reduces cancer mortality	Inadequate
4. Depth of religion and death	Cons. Failure
5. Reduces disability	Inadequate
6. Slows progression of cancer	Cons. Failure
7. Cope with religion and death	Inadequate
8. Impedes recovery from acute illness	Some
9. Prayer aids recovery from illness	Some

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Religion and Mental Health

Classic literature review (Gartner, Larson, & Allen, 1991)

- Analyzed over 200 studies.
- Separated measures into "hard" and "soft" categories.
- With "hard" measures religious involvement is related to positive mental health.
 - E.g., More frequent church attendance = less suicide.
- With "soft" measures, religion tends to predict negative outcomes.
 - E.g., More religiosity = higher authoritarian scores.
- (See page 252)

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Religion and Mental Health

- “Religion” is related to . . .
 - Less distress and greater life satisfaction.
 - More psychological well-being.
 - Less hostility, depression, suicide, marital dissatisfaction
- Religion might also be related to . . .
 - More anxiety and guilt.
 - Less self-esteem.
 - More “authoritarianism” and “dogmatism”

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Religion and Mental Health

- “Religion” is NOT related to . . .
 - Psychosis.
 - Denial, repression, or other defense mechanisms.

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Religion and Physical Health

Possible Causal Links

What might cause the relationship between “religion” and health?

- Social Support
- Encouraging Healthy Behaviors
- Coherence and Meaning
- Consoling
- Non-physical Sense of Self

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