

health. The psycho-oncological approach is a multidisciplinary one, as modern medicine recognizes more and more the role of spirituality in the treatment and recovery from various pathological conditions. Spirituality is the adaptive capability of intelligent beings to retain the will for life in spite of adversities and awareness of the imminence of death. The struggle with this life-threatening disease requires an adaptation to a new life situation characterized by changed routines of everyday life and dynamics of personal relationships. Faced with a challenge of malignant disease people are nevertheless able to react with positive personality changes, which leads them to a more meaningful and substantial life. Malignant disease can represent an opportunity for spiritual growth, a dimension often neglected by contemporary lifestyles. A healthy spiritual life presumes spiritual guidance in recognizing the authentic values and purpose of life, and it can empower us in times of crisis, such as having to face a malignant condition.

Religion, as an important constituent part of spirituality, can offer the believer a meaning of suffering and thus turn the disease into an opportunity for self-knowledge and development of a more mature spirituality. Christian spirituality can represent a path which helps an individual to cope with malignant disease. Through the practice of religious life (prayer, Mass, contemplating the Gospel, etc.) a Christian can mitigate feelings of fear, suffering, pain and gain help in achieving inner peace. Religiosity as a key ingredient of spirituality can help a person come to terms with malignant disease and facilitate a favourable treatment outcome. Clinical studies confirm that spirituality and religiosity are able to reduce anxiety and depression in patients with malignant disease (Chaar et al. 2018). Also, highly pronounced religiosity has been shown to reduce the incidence of depression in patients with breast carcinoma (Margetić et al. 2005). In Christian spirituality, the goal is not only to accept our feelings, wounds and illnesses by growing in manhood and discovering inner wealth, but also to acquire the experience of faith precisely where our human ability stops, thus opening up our relationship with God at the point where we feel entirely alone (Grun & Dufner 2004).

“Psycho-oncology and spirituality” is an interdisciplinary field which opens up the way to a personalized approach, envisioning the patient as a whole and encouraging him to actively participate in the treatment process, thus achieving spiritual growth and a higher quality of life.

With the aim of educating and sensitising students in accordance with current medical trends, the Medical Faculty of the University of Rijeka has introduced in 2019 an elective course called “Psycho-oncology and spirituality”. The goal of this course is to enable students to identify emotional reactions to the disease in oncological patients, recognize parallel mental comorbidities, and finally, clarify the need for a multidisciplinary approach involving an oncologist, a psychiatrist and a psychotherapist, as well as to elucidate the importance of spirituality in the process of oncological treatment. Through lectures and exercises, students familiarize themselves with theory, clinical studies as well as clinical practice relating to interconnectedness of oncological pathology with certain psychiatric disorders, along with acquiring an all-encompassing view of spirituality, as seen from several perspectives (biological, theoretical principles, etc.). Students are also taught to observe the religious life of patients, in order to be able to understand, appreciate and encourage patients to affirm their faith with the aim of achieving therapeutic goals.

Key words: psycho-oncology - spirituality - religion

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COMPASSION: AN EXPRESSION OF CHARITY IN TREATMENT OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ILLNESS IN INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

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This article discusses the notion of compassion using interdisciplinary approach - theological and psychological - providing a brief development of the notion, as well as distinct image in relation to other, similar notions. Seeing that compassion contributes to psychological, spiritual, as well as social health, the article also discusses the importance of compassion in life of individuals and communities. Compassion is also one of the core notions in world religions, and it is key to making communication between religions possible, and equally importantly, opens up a dialogue between religion and various scientific approaches. This article mostly refers to the notion of compassion as described in the Bible, namely New Testament, from aspect of Christianity. Still, in a smaller extent, we researched how Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and

Judaism perceive and describe compassion. Development of compassion in personal and social relations greatly helps in achieving a healthier society, both for individuals and for the whole communities.

Key words: compassion - suffering - psychology - theology - religion

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CONNECTION BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXUALITY IN MONTENEGRO

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The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between religiosity and liberal versus conservative attitudes about sex. The study involved 1287 residents of Montenegro over the age of 18, of which 848 women and 439 men. They completed the scale for examining the liberality of attitudes about sex, which the authors of the article compiled for the purposes of this research. Respondents declared their religiosity as believers, agnostics or atheists, so there were 957 believers, 171 atheists and 159 agnostics in the sample. We found that agnostics are the most liberal in terms of attitudes about sex, then atheists and then believers. In addition to religiosity, we examined the connection of attitudes about sex with gender, age, and education level. More educated respondents proved to be more liberal than less educated ones. The women in our sample proved to be more conservative than the men. We did not confirm the assumption that younger respondents would be more liberal than older ones, which can be partly explained by the numerical inequality of age groups. The knowledge we have gained in this study can be of great use primarily as guidelines for further research work, and can also be implemented in various educational programs.

Key words: religion - sex - education - psychology - sexuality

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EUDAIMONIA, PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Eudaimonia means fulfilling our unique potential as human beings, not only in terms of happiness but also in virtue, morality, and meaningful life. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between eudaimonia and mental health and to look into the moderating role of psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) in this relationship. In total 340 participants took part in this study, of which 124 (36.5%) males and 216 (63.5%) females. Global mental health, positive and negative mental health were measured with the Mental Health Inventory. Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities was used to determine eudaimonia, while three psychological needs were investigated with the Basic Psychological Needs Scale. Hierarchical regression analyses and analyses of variance were used to analyze the data. The results indicate that eudaimonia significantly contributes to global mental health ($R^2=0.08$, $p<0.001$), negative mental health ($R^2=0.07$, $p<0.01$) and positive mental health ($R^2=0.09$, $p<0.0005$). Of all psychological needs, relatedness was shown to moderate the relationship between eudaimonia and global mental health ($R^2=0.47$, $p<0.05$) as well as the relationship between eudaimonia and negative mental health ($R^2=0.40$, $p<0.05$). The findings indicate that eudaimonia positively affects all aspects of mental health and that relatedness amplifies the effects of eudaimonia on global and negative mental health.

Key words: eudaimonia - mental health - relatedness

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