Daily spiritual experiences and symptoms of depression among cardiac patients



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Introduction: Cardiac patients often suffer from unrecognized symptoms of depression. The provision of spiritual healthcare is regarded as a form of prevention of the symptoms of depression. Aim: To examine the correlation between daily spiritual experience and depression among cardiac patients.

Patients and Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out at the Institute for Cardiovascular Diseases of the University Hospital Center Osijek. The inclusion criterion was the presence of cardiovascular disease. There were 182 subjects participating in the study. The research instrument was an anonymous survey, that included sociodemographic data, the daily spiritual experience scale, and the Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventory.

Results: Five subjects (2.7%) suffered from severe depression, while 31 subjects (17%) suffered from severe anxiety. 115 subjects (63.2%) felt very close or as close as possible to God, 41 subjects (22.5%) felt somewhat close to God, and 26 subjects (14.3%) did not feel close to God. There was no significant correlation between daily spiritual experience and the anxiety and depression assessments. The only significant and strong positive correlation is the correlation between anxiety and depression – subjects suffering from more severe anxiety also suffer from more severe depression, and vice versa.

Conclusion: Based on the data obtained in this research, it has been confirmed that depression and anxiety are present among cardiac patients and that they represent an independent risk factor for the onset of cardiovascular diseases. The need to address psychosocial factors must be recognized by cardiac care nurses to improve the patients' quality of life. By applying specific knowledge involving the concept of spirituality, nurses help patients achieve spiritual balance and promote health and well-being.

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