

A HOLISTIC VIEW OF HEALTH

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Psychiatry and religion as social practices should be regarded as allies against pseudoscientific nonsense and superstitions. The enduring task for both psychiatry and religion is to enable human beings to live their lives with courage, sense, and optimism, to strive towards creating conditions of

well-being and individual, public and global mental health as well as to dispel beliefs and patterns which trap people in lives of misery and mental disorders (Jakovljevic 2017).

Religion is a law set by Allah and it ensures peace and tranquility by preventing conflicts and quarrels among people.

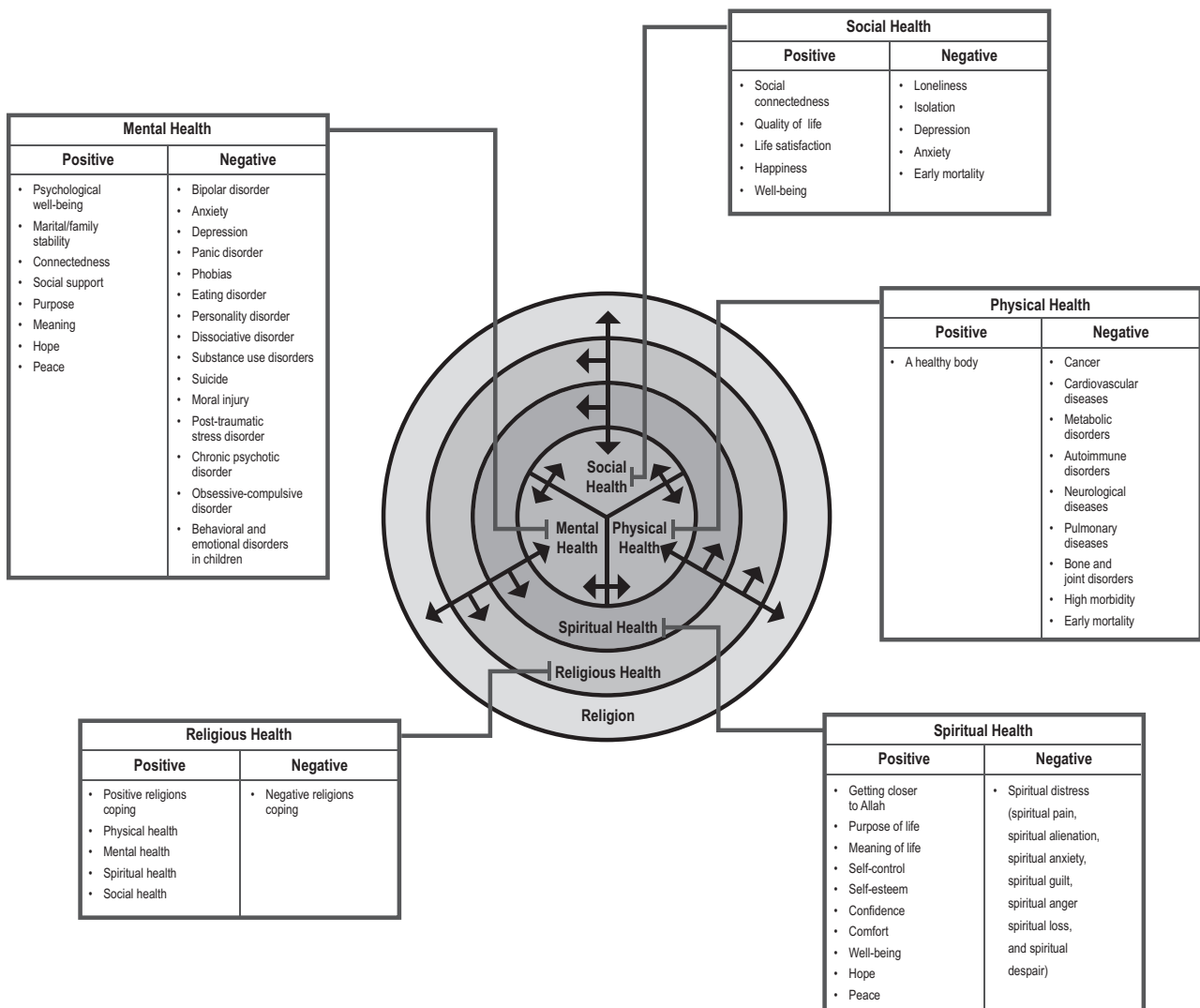


Fig. 1. The relationship between physical, mental, social, spiritual, and religious health and their positive and negative effects on general health.

Religion leads people to peace, goodness, blessings, and salvation in this world and in the hereafter (Tümer 1994). Spirituality, a dimension of religion, is the high states, blessings, tastes, and happiness that a person feels in his own conscience and soul when he fulfills the de facto gratitude by acting in accordance with Allah's orders and prohibitions with his material organs, intangible feelings, and subtle faculties (Çaksen et al. 2024). However, religion is usually mistakenly used synonymously with spirituality in the literature. Although there is a very close relationship between them, in fact, just as religion and spirituality are different, religious health and spiritual health are also different.

The World Health Organization discerns four dimensions of health, namely physical, mental, social, and spiritual health (Religion and health 2023); however, religious health has been overlooked. In this article, we discussed the relationship between physical, mental, social, spiritual, and religious health and their effects on health to draw attention to the importance of holistic health.

There are five dimensions of health: physical, mental, social, spiritual, and religious. A holistic approach to health is essential for a balanced, fulfilling and healthy life. Figure 1 shows the relationships between physical, mental, social, spiritual, and religious health and their positive and negative effects on health. The relationships between physical, mental, social, spiritual and religious health is very close, often intertwined, profound and symbiotic. Religious health and spiritual health are also closely interrelated and affect physical, mental, and social health. Religion, which is the basic manifesto of life and a law set by Allah, affects all dimensions of health. Religious and spiritual well-being is an important component of mental health as well as of health in general (Jakovljevic 2017).

There is a strong link between mental health and physical health. Past mental (physical) health has a significant direct and indirect impact on physical (mental) health. The indirect effect of past mental health on physical health is mediated by lifestyle choices and social interactions. The relationship of past physical health with present mental health is only mediated by past physical activity (Ohrnberger et al. 2017). On the other hand, physical health problems significantly increase the risk of developing mental health problems, and vice versa.

Severe or prolonged (chronic) stress results in increased risk for physical and psychiatric disorders, which is called stress-related disease. Stress is the common risk factor of 75-90% diseases, including the diseases which cause the foremost morbidity and mortality. Large bodies of evidence indicate that stress can activate inflammatory response in brain as well as peripherally. Excessive inflammation plays critical roles in the progression, and/or onset of stress-related diseases (Liu et al. 2017).

Social health is defined as adequate quantity and quality of relationships in a particular context to meet an individual's need for meaningful human connection (Doyle & Link 2024). High-quality social connections are essential to our mental and physical health and our well-being. There is a positive relationship between happiness, quality of life, life satisfaction and social health (Sharbatyian & Imani 2018). A large body of research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on physical and mental health, quality of life, and longevity. The effect of social isolation and loneliness on mortality is comparable to that of other well-established risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity (Social Isolation and Loneliness 2024).

Spiritual health refers to an individual's subjective experience of psychic well-being. Spiritual health complements mental, social, and physical aspects of integrated and holistic models of health. The spiritual component of health incorporates an intersubjective experience of peace. Perceived interconnectedness with the social worlds, nature and the environment, and the invisible supernatural spheres of life further defines the essence of spiritual health. Cross-cultural religious practices, expressions of faith, and transcendental rituals abound in individual quests for spiritual wellness and health in general (Mulemi 2017).

True religions provide to physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being through shaping behavior, creating systems of meaning, altering one's outlook on life, building community and social support, supporting moral beliefs, and through an experience of the transcendent. The common name of the true religions brought by all prophets, from Adam (Alayhi As-Salam), the first man and the first prophet, to the last Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam), is Islam (Tümer 1994). Allah says that surely the (true) religion of Allah is Islam. And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, shall not be accepted by him, and in the hereafter, he shall be one of the losers (Surah Al-Imran 2024). "Religious health" is the state of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being that occurs by complying with the orders, prohibitions and rules of the true religion that is Islam mentioned by Allah.

There is much recent research that demonstrates that religious involvement can serve as a resource that enhances individuals' mental health and well-being and can prevent the development of mental disorders or speed their resolution. Religiosity appears to be most effective in preventing suicide and substance use disorders; moderately effective in preventing depression, and possibly also trauma-related disorders and antisocial personality disorder and traits; but the findings are mixed for other personality disorders, anxiety, bipolar disorder and chronic psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia (Koenig et al. 2020).

In conclusion, there are five dimensions of health: physical, mental, social, spiritual, and religious. A holistic approach to health is essential because physical, mental, social, spiritual, and religious health are often intertwined. Religion, a law set by Allah, religious health, and spiritual health are also closely interrelated and affect physical, mental, and social health. Lastly, we strongly believe that the most important dimension

of health is “religious health” because religion is the light of happiness, sublimity of feeling, and salvation of conscience (Nursi 2012).

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