

Prayer and Health

2000: Prayer for health reasons was the most common CME request across the past year (47% of all ever used)

- Prayer specifically for one's own health (47% of all ever used)
- Prayer for others for one's own health (16% of all ever used)

90% would like physicians to ask their patients if prayer is of help in a circumstance

Use of prayer by healthcare providers can vary

- 2000 National survey of critical care nurses
 - 73% reported to "frequently" pray
 - 25% praying used prayer in practice
 - 60% recommended use to patients
 - 25% report patients or their families have requested prayer

1
00:00:03,190 --> 00:00:01,350
all right

2
00:00:05,030 --> 00:00:03,200
well good morning i want to begin by

3
00:00:07,510 --> 00:00:05,040
thanking the society for the invitation

4
00:00:09,270 --> 00:00:07,520
to come and speak today it's uh

5
00:00:11,030 --> 00:00:09,280
an honor for me to have the opportunity

6
00:00:13,830 --> 00:00:11,040
to do so

7
00:00:15,430 --> 00:00:13,840
and in terms of time i know i'm asked to

8
00:00:17,910 --> 00:00:15,440
keep to 45 minutes we're starting a

9
00:00:20,070 --> 00:00:17,920
little late so if you want me to just

10
00:00:22,070 --> 00:00:20,080
finish by ten just cue me and i'll try

11
00:00:24,310 --> 00:00:22,080
to speed through some of my material

12
00:00:26,630 --> 00:00:24,320
mainly i just i will cut off the

13
00:00:28,070 --> 00:00:26,640

speakers strictly five minutes before

14

00:00:30,790 --> 00:00:28,080

the end just so there's time for

15

00:00:32,870 --> 00:00:30,800

questions okay great

16

00:00:34,790 --> 00:00:32,880

well um today we're going to be talking

17

00:00:36,870 --> 00:00:34,800

about prayer and i'm going to begin by

18

00:00:39,590 --> 00:00:36,880

providing some background information on

19

00:00:41,590 --> 00:00:39,600

prayer and healing before we segue into

20

00:00:43,350 --> 00:00:41,600

talking about my project which is the

21

00:00:46,549 --> 00:00:43,360

effect of intercessory prayer on wound

22

00:00:48,389 --> 00:00:46,559

healing in non-human primates

23

00:00:50,869 --> 00:00:48,399

we see an increasing interest in

24

00:00:53,430 --> 00:00:50,879

spirituality and religion in our society

25

00:00:55,270 --> 00:00:53,440

particularly over the last 15 and

26

00:00:57,350 --> 00:00:55,280

20 years or so

27

00:00:59,110 --> 00:00:57,360

and out of the number of factors of

28

00:01:00,950 --> 00:00:59,120

spirituality and religion that seem to

29

00:01:02,950 --> 00:01:00,960

be peaking people's interest one of

30

00:01:05,830 --> 00:01:02,960

those is the relationship between those

31

00:01:08,070 --> 00:01:05,840

in health and in part driven by the

32

00:01:10,550 --> 00:01:08,080

fairly robust literature that we have

33

00:01:12,390 --> 00:01:10,560

that establishes a relationship a

34

00:01:14,469 --> 00:01:12,400

positive relationship not always but

35

00:01:17,670 --> 00:01:14,479

mostly positive between those constructs

36

00:01:20,310 --> 00:01:17,680

and health outcomes we're also

37

00:01:22,230 --> 00:01:20,320

quite a religious and spiritual society

38

00:01:25,350 --> 00:01:22,240

if we look at data from the general

39

00:01:27,990 --> 00:01:25,360

social survey back in 2006

40

00:01:29,990 --> 00:01:28,000

individuals who endorsed themselves as

41

00:01:32,870 --> 00:01:30,000

at least moderately religious if not

42

00:01:34,710 --> 00:01:32,880

very religious was 63 percent with 15

43

00:01:36,149 --> 00:01:34,720

percent saying they were not religious

44

00:01:37,749 --> 00:01:36,159

at all

45

00:01:39,670 --> 00:01:37,759

the picture is a little different with

46

00:01:43,749 --> 00:01:39,680

spirituality the numbers are somewhat

47

00:01:46,550 --> 00:01:43,759

higher 71 in 2006 identifying themselves

48

00:01:48,870 --> 00:01:46,560

as quite spiritual with nine percent not

49

00:01:50,870 --> 00:01:48,880

spiritual at all and even though the

50

00:01:54,389 --> 00:01:50,880

levels of religiosity appear to be

51
00:01:56,630 --> 00:01:54,399
staying approximately stable across time

52
00:01:58,389 --> 00:01:56,640
that's not so with spirituality people

53
00:02:00,310 --> 00:01:58,399
are beginning to feel themselves as

54
00:02:02,950 --> 00:02:00,320
being more spiritual across time and

55
00:02:05,429 --> 00:02:02,960
willing to identify themselves that way

56
00:02:07,749 --> 00:02:05,439
if we pose a somewhat different question

57
00:02:10,070 --> 00:02:07,759
and ask people about their belief in god

58
00:02:13,430 --> 00:02:10,080
or some higher power we see those

59
00:02:15,270 --> 00:02:13,440
numbers spike up considerably around 95

60
00:02:17,430 --> 00:02:15,280
percent of people endorse the fact that

61
00:02:19,589 --> 00:02:17,440
they believe in some

62
00:02:20,790 --> 00:02:19,599
creator some divine

63
00:02:22,790 --> 00:02:20,800

something

64

00:02:25,430 --> 00:02:22,800

some god and of course there's some

65

00:02:27,990 --> 00:02:25,440

variation by certain factors for example

66

00:02:31,030 --> 00:02:28,000

by age we see spirituality and

67

00:02:32,790 --> 00:02:31,040

religiosity increasing with age uh

68

00:02:35,110 --> 00:02:32,800

there's some variation in terms of

69

00:02:37,110 --> 00:02:35,120

geographic location in our country with

70

00:02:39,190 --> 00:02:37,120

the south having particularly high

71

00:02:41,350 --> 00:02:39,200

levels of both those constructs and

72

00:02:44,150 --> 00:02:41,360

there's an inverse relationship with

73

00:02:46,150 --> 00:02:44,160

education and spirituality and religion

74

00:02:48,470 --> 00:02:46,160

even though spirituality and religion

75

00:02:51,030 --> 00:02:48,480

talk about uh two somewhat different

76

00:02:53,110 --> 00:02:51,040

animals spirituality is more about the

77

00:02:55,190 --> 00:02:53,120

individual's

78

00:02:57,990 --> 00:02:55,200

quest for a relationship with the

79

00:03:00,470 --> 00:02:58,000

transcendent or the divine that happens

80

00:03:03,110 --> 00:03:00,480

individually independent of community

81

00:03:06,070 --> 00:03:03,120

most times religion we think of as an

82

00:03:08,390 --> 00:03:06,080

institution or a social phenomenon it is

83

00:03:10,550 --> 00:03:08,400

a community and people are gathered

84

00:03:12,790 --> 00:03:10,560

together in community around some common

85

00:03:15,830 --> 00:03:12,800

factors common sets of beliefs common

86

00:03:18,070 --> 00:03:15,840

practices rituals symbology and so on

87

00:03:20,229 --> 00:03:18,080

there are some shared behaviors across

88

00:03:23,430 --> 00:03:20,239

both those constructs and prayer is one

89

00:03:25,110 --> 00:03:23,440

of them so what is prayer simply defined

90

00:03:27,350 --> 00:03:25,120

it's a communion

91

00:03:28,470 --> 00:03:27,360

or communication with the divine or the

92

00:03:30,869 --> 00:03:28,480

creator

93

00:03:34,630 --> 00:03:30,879

it is practiced in some form by

94

00:03:36,630 --> 00:03:34,640

virtually every religion on the planet

95

00:03:39,030 --> 00:03:36,640

there are a number of different types of

96

00:03:41,270 --> 00:03:39,040

prayer there has been some work to

97

00:03:43,270 --> 00:03:41,280

empirically identify categories of

98

00:03:44,789 --> 00:03:43,280

prayer that occurred across the last two

99

00:03:47,350 --> 00:03:44,799

decades or so

100

00:03:49,670 --> 00:03:47,360

and we see that there may be somewhere

101
00:03:51,990 --> 00:03:49,680
between four and nine categories and

102
00:03:54,869 --> 00:03:52,000
i've given you a selection of those up

103
00:03:56,710 --> 00:03:54,879
here we can have conversational prayer

104
00:03:58,630 --> 00:03:56,720
where one is engaged in some

105
00:04:00,550 --> 00:03:58,640
conversation or dialogue with the

106
00:04:03,429 --> 00:04:00,560
creator or the divine

107
00:04:05,750 --> 00:04:03,439
thanksgiving prayers of gratitude

108
00:04:07,990 --> 00:04:05,760
meditative or contemplative prayer we

109
00:04:10,390 --> 00:04:08,000
can think of this as a more receptive

110
00:04:12,470 --> 00:04:10,400
kind of prayer where one may be sitting

111
00:04:15,429 --> 00:04:12,480
listening for the voice of god or

112
00:04:17,990 --> 00:04:15,439
experiencing god in some capacity

113
00:04:20,229 --> 00:04:18,000

petitionary prayer is prayer that an

114

00:04:23,110 --> 00:04:20,239

individual offers up on behalf of

115

00:04:25,270 --> 00:04:23,120

themselves with some request in mind

116

00:04:28,310 --> 00:04:25,280

typically it may be for some material

117

00:04:30,950 --> 00:04:28,320

gain it may be an answer to some problem

118

00:04:32,230 --> 00:04:30,960

in one's life it may be a request for

119

00:04:34,710 --> 00:04:32,240

healing

120

00:04:37,350 --> 00:04:34,720

intercessory prayer is prayer that an

121

00:04:39,749 --> 00:04:37,360

individual offers on behalf of someone

122

00:04:41,430 --> 00:04:39,759

else and it's offered on behalf of

123

00:04:44,629 --> 00:04:41,440

someone else to provide that other

124

00:04:46,950 --> 00:04:44,639

person some benefit and it may actually

125

00:04:51,590 --> 00:04:46,960

be to pray for healing of that other

126
00:04:56,070 --> 00:04:54,150
do people use prayer for healing in our

127
00:04:59,189 --> 00:04:56,080
society and the data would suggest that

128
00:05:00,390 --> 00:04:59,199
in fact they do in 2004 the cdc

129
00:05:02,550 --> 00:05:00,400
published a

130
00:05:05,030 --> 00:05:02,560
survey of the use of complementary and

131
00:05:07,430 --> 00:05:05,040
alternative medicines in our society and

132
00:05:09,670 --> 00:05:07,440
prayer is listed as a cam

133
00:05:12,070 --> 00:05:09,680
and individuals endorse the use of

134
00:05:13,510 --> 00:05:12,080
prayer for health reasons as the most

135
00:05:15,110 --> 00:05:13,520
common cam

136
00:05:16,469 --> 00:05:15,120
in the year prior

137
00:05:18,950 --> 00:05:16,479
45

138
00:05:20,710 --> 00:05:18,960

used it the year prior with 55

139

00:05:23,749 --> 00:05:20,720

indicating that at some point in their

140

00:05:25,830 --> 00:05:23,759

life they actually prayed for health of

141

00:05:27,990 --> 00:05:25,840

prayer specifically offered for one's

142

00:05:31,430 --> 00:05:28,000

own health about 43

143

00:05:33,990 --> 00:05:31,440

in the year prior with 52 lifetime use

144

00:05:35,990 --> 00:05:34,000

and prayer by others for one's own

145

00:05:39,350 --> 00:05:36,000

health or being the recipient of

146

00:05:41,189 --> 00:05:39,360

intercessory prayer a little over 24

147

00:05:43,189 --> 00:05:41,199

reported that they were aware that they

148

00:05:45,189 --> 00:05:43,199

were the receipt they were receiving

149

00:05:46,310 --> 00:05:45,199

prayer for their own healing the year

150

00:05:48,390 --> 00:05:46,320

prior

151
00:05:50,070 --> 00:05:48,400
many patients endorse the fact they

152
00:05:52,150 --> 00:05:50,080
would like their physicians to pray with

153
00:05:53,909 --> 00:05:52,160
them and the numbers are fairly high

154
00:05:56,469 --> 00:05:53,919
about 70 percent would like their

155
00:05:59,110 --> 00:05:56,479
physicians to pray with them at least

156
00:06:00,950 --> 00:05:59,120
under some circumstances and how

157
00:06:03,270 --> 00:06:00,960
frequently do health care providers

158
00:06:06,150 --> 00:06:03,280
actually use prayer that varies it

159
00:06:08,309 --> 00:06:06,160
varies depending on the type of provider

160
00:06:10,469 --> 00:06:08,319
it certainly varies on the individual it

161
00:06:12,710 --> 00:06:10,479
will vary in terms of the healthcare

162
00:06:14,710 --> 00:06:12,720
setting where the provider finds

163
00:06:16,790 --> 00:06:14,720

themselves if it's a setting that is

164

00:06:18,870 --> 00:06:16,800

more open to the use of prayer and

165

00:06:20,710 --> 00:06:18,880

practice then we may be more likely to

166

00:06:23,350 --> 00:06:20,720

see it

167

00:06:25,990 --> 00:06:23,360

here's some data 2005 survey that

168

00:06:28,070 --> 00:06:26,000

queried uh critical care nurses

169

00:06:30,309 --> 00:06:28,080

nationally to see about their use of

170

00:06:32,469 --> 00:06:30,319

prayer and prayer was viewed as

171

00:06:35,590 --> 00:06:32,479

legitimate therapy by most of the nurses

172

00:06:37,350 --> 00:06:35,600

that were surveyed with 73 percent

173

00:06:38,870 --> 00:06:37,360

identifying that they had used prayer in

174

00:06:41,670 --> 00:06:38,880

their own practice

175

00:06:43,990 --> 00:06:41,680

many recommend its use to patients

176
00:06:46,150 --> 00:06:44,000
and almost 80 percent reported that

177
00:06:50,469 --> 00:06:46,160
patients or their families had actually

178
00:06:54,070 --> 00:06:52,870
and does personal prayer or private

179
00:06:55,830 --> 00:06:54,080
prayer we're going to talk about

180
00:06:57,909 --> 00:06:55,840
intercessory prayer it's a little

181
00:07:00,390 --> 00:06:57,919
different animal in just a minute so

182
00:07:02,870 --> 00:07:00,400
does private or personal prayer actually

183
00:07:04,870 --> 00:07:02,880
influence health and the data is clear

184
00:07:06,870 --> 00:07:04,880
that by and large it does in positive

185
00:07:09,589 --> 00:07:06,880
ways there are positive benefits to

186
00:07:11,830 --> 00:07:09,599
engaging in personal prayer and we see

187
00:07:14,070 --> 00:07:11,840
this across a number of categories of

188
00:07:15,990 --> 00:07:14,080

outcomes coping with stress

189

00:07:17,430 --> 00:07:16,000

it helps people to cope with acute and

190

00:07:19,830 --> 00:07:17,440

chronic stress

191

00:07:24,309 --> 00:07:19,840

helps individuals to deal with illness

192

00:07:28,070 --> 00:07:25,909

we see a reduction in terms of

193

00:07:29,830 --> 00:07:28,080

psychiatric symptoms and disorders so we

194

00:07:31,029 --> 00:07:29,840

see lower levels of psychological

195

00:07:34,070 --> 00:07:31,039

distress

196

00:07:36,629 --> 00:07:34,080

lower levels of depression for example

197

00:07:39,189 --> 00:07:36,639

and the converse not only is the our

198

00:07:41,189 --> 00:07:39,199

negative consequences or negative affect

199

00:07:43,749 --> 00:07:41,199

diminished we see an augmentation of

200

00:07:45,350 --> 00:07:43,759

positive effects so people experience

201
00:07:47,749 --> 00:07:45,360
greater levels of happiness and

202
00:07:51,270 --> 00:07:47,759
satisfaction and well-being as a result

203
00:07:56,390 --> 00:07:54,230
the pathways the causal pathways that

204
00:07:59,110 --> 00:07:56,400
help us understand how personal prayer

205
00:08:01,270 --> 00:07:59,120
can actually affect positive health

206
00:08:03,189 --> 00:08:01,280
outcomes are really quite

207
00:08:04,790 --> 00:08:03,199
straightforward they're naturalistic

208
00:08:06,869 --> 00:08:04,800
there's nothing about this that is

209
00:08:09,189 --> 00:08:06,879
exceptional there are several categories

210
00:08:11,430 --> 00:08:09,199
that they're mentioning as a result of

211
00:08:13,270 --> 00:08:11,440
engaging in personal prayer there can be

212
00:08:15,909 --> 00:08:13,280
psychological changes within an

213
00:08:18,390 --> 00:08:15,919

individual there can be cognitive shifts

214

00:08:19,430 --> 00:08:18,400

there can be cognitive processes that

215

00:08:21,350 --> 00:08:19,440

are

216

00:08:24,230 --> 00:08:21,360

shifted in the direction of providing

217

00:08:26,950 --> 00:08:24,240

salutary benefit to one's body

218

00:08:29,110 --> 00:08:26,960

for example control and self-efficacy

219

00:08:31,189 --> 00:08:29,120

are two cognitions that are robustly

220

00:08:33,589 --> 00:08:31,199

related to positive health outcomes and

221

00:08:35,509 --> 00:08:33,599

we see individuals who pray have a

222

00:08:37,509 --> 00:08:35,519

greater sense of control in their life

223

00:08:39,430 --> 00:08:37,519

or their level of self-confidence about

224

00:08:40,709 --> 00:08:39,440

being able to approach problems

225

00:08:43,829 --> 00:08:40,719

increases

226

00:08:46,310 --> 00:08:43,839

we see emotionality shift so that

227

00:08:48,790 --> 00:08:46,320

negative affect diminishes and positive

228

00:08:50,389 --> 00:08:48,800

affect is enhanced as i mentioned in the

229

00:08:52,150 --> 00:08:50,399

slide prior

230

00:08:54,910 --> 00:08:52,160

there are some behavioral changes that

231

00:08:57,190 --> 00:08:54,920

occur as a result of prayer rest and

232

00:08:59,910 --> 00:08:57,200

relaxation occurs

233

00:09:02,310 --> 00:08:59,920

uh increased health promoting behaviors

234

00:09:04,870 --> 00:09:02,320

oftentimes with a consequent decrease in

235

00:09:06,790 --> 00:09:04,880

risk enhancing behaviors

236

00:09:09,190 --> 00:09:06,800

we see that there can be social

237

00:09:11,990 --> 00:09:09,200

consequences of engaging in prayer if

238

00:09:14,070 --> 00:09:12,000

one is in conversation with the divine

239

00:09:15,990 --> 00:09:14,080

that can instill a feeling in the

240

00:09:18,790 --> 00:09:16,000

individual that they're actually cared

241

00:09:21,430 --> 00:09:18,800

for or cared about in social factors of

242

00:09:24,070 --> 00:09:21,440

course again another robust category for

243

00:09:25,910 --> 00:09:24,080

predicting positive health outcomes and

244

00:09:29,110 --> 00:09:25,920

it's likely that there are some common

245

00:09:32,710 --> 00:09:29,120

physiological pathways that shift as a

246

00:09:34,590 --> 00:09:32,720

result of some of these prior categories

247

00:09:36,870 --> 00:09:34,600

and these have to do with the

248

00:09:39,269 --> 00:09:36,880

neuroendocrinological pathways or

249

00:09:40,870 --> 00:09:39,279

primarily the stress response systems

250

00:09:42,710 --> 00:09:40,880

and there are two

251

00:09:44,470 --> 00:09:42,720

when an individual experiences a

252

00:09:46,790 --> 00:09:44,480

stressful event there are two stress

253

00:09:49,269 --> 00:09:46,800

response systems that come online one is

254

00:09:51,750 --> 00:09:49,279

a sympathetic nervous system the other

255

00:09:54,550 --> 00:09:51,760

is the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal

256

00:09:57,509 --> 00:09:54,560

axis or the hpa axis with the