

Title: Negative religious coping predict greater depressive symptoms and less life satisfaction

Authors: Kira A. Barros, Hannah Toyama, & John E. Perez

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to identify negative religious coping methods that have an association with depressive symptoms and life satisfaction among cancer patients. This study was based on Pargament's (1997) framework of positive and negative religious coping styles that specify how an individual makes use of religion to understand and deal with stressors. The sample included 179 predominantly White, Christian, female patients with stage II through IV cancer. We used a cross-sectional design with self-report measures to examine punishing God reappraisal and spiritual discontent as they relate to depressive symptoms and satisfaction with life. We hypothesized that both negative religious coping styles would predict greater depressive symptoms and less life satisfaction. Controlling for sex, age, education level, and family income level, a standard multiple regression showed that both punishing God reappraisal and spiritual discontent predicted greater levels of depressive symptoms ($R\text{-squared} = .19, p < .001$); however, only punishing God reappraisal predicted less life satisfaction ($R\text{-squared} = .21, p < .001$). These findings suggest that some types of religious coping can have a negative association with well-being among cancer patients. Therapists, nurses, and clergy members who identify patients who use negative religious coping styles may offer additional support to these patients to enhance their well-being.

Keywords: negative religious coping styles, punishing God reappraisal, spiritual discontent, depressive symptoms, life satisfaction, cancer patients