

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Spiritual health: The often-overlooked dimension of health

Clarence E. Riley, Jr., PhD,¹ Peter Imoyera, MBBS,¹ Oreta Samples, RVT, MPH, DHSc,¹ and Gregory Green, PhD¹

¹Department of Veterinary Science & Public Health, Fort Valley State University, Fort Valley, GA

Background: Spiritual health, one of the six dimensions of health (physical, social, intellectual, emotional, environmental, and spiritual), is often overlooked and has become less prominent in the literature and in public forums. This once-touted dimension of health is now seldom considered.

Methods: A review revealed that literature on spiritual health is sparse and, when found, is dated.

Results: The existing literature indicates that spiritual health relates to various aspects of well-being, including medical/physical health, mental/psychological health, and educational/intellectual health. It is likely that the decline of consideration of spiritual health is due to the decrease in public discussion of spiritual matters and to the tendency of our society to focus on “political correctness.”

Conclusions: Although the fear of alienating others by political incorrectness is foremost in the minds of many, this does not negate the fact that spiritual health is of benefit and can lead many to experiencing a better standard of health. It is our contention that spiritual health is often overlooked but has benefits that need not be concealed by political correctness. Spiritual health should be returned to the mainstream of public health, where its benefits can be enjoyed by those who choose to use them.