

Faith's Role in Patients' approaches to Healthcare Decisions

Names: Maeve Chawk, Colin Fitzgerald, Andrew Ganning, Grace Sorrentino, Justina Zolikoff

Advisor: Dr. Laura Leming SSC 200 H3

Focus of Studies

This is a literature review focusing on faith's role in breaking down financial and cultural barriers to healthcare.



Research and Key Points

● **Barriers to Healthcare**

- Stigmas to seeking treatment
 - In Latino families, there is a stigma around seeking mental health care as individuals can be perceived as weak. People resort to attending church and talking to religious figures before seeking professional help.
- Financial barriers
 - Many Americans aren't able to afford proper treatment due to rising healthcare costs.
 - E.g., Hurricane Katrina survivors used religious and spiritual coping before using religious resources. The main reason were the financial effects the hurricane aftermath had.
 - Natural disasters exacerbate these financial barriers since they prevent individuals from receiving treatment
- Stereotypes in healthcare
 - Many patients are misunderstood in their faith and thus do not have trust or a connection with their healthcare providers
 - "Even among rural minority communities in America (for which healthcare delivery presents exceptional difficulties), the Amish have unique characteristics that make delivery of healthcare services particularly challenging." (Rohr 2019)
 - In the textbook used to educate nursing students there are blatant examples of patient stereotyping and profiling based on a patient's religious affiliations among other categories. Quoted directly from the textbook "Blacks often report higher pain intensity and Jews may be vocal and demanding".

Research and Key Points (continued)

● **Breaking down Barriers**

- Patients that are stuck in hospitals were given the opportunity to have a chaplain come in to help with spiritual guidance and pastoral care. "My goal first is to listen... walk in there to see if you can help, listen to them. See if their spirit is okay" (Norwood 2006).
- This allowed patients to experience what it was like to be healed spiritually and gain awareness of religious impact
- "Each local partnership was led by an organization with a faith-based identity and mission or a strong outreach program into diverse faith communities. Their pre-existing relationships with organizational networks allowed sites to be trusted intermediaries with reach into their communities" (Kiser 2019).
- Health Care Sharing Ministries are faith-based organizations that have increased in response to increasing healthcare costs in the US, offering an alternative to healthcare insurance plans.
- Financial barriers are some of the most deterring factors when it comes to receiving treatment, so patients will feel more at ease receiving care knowing that costs are lower

Conclusion

Through our research and analysis, we have found that faith-based approaches to healthcare break down the barriers which deter people from seeking treatment. Although there are different types of barriers that communities face, they all prevent individuals from receiving the care they deserve. Through increased support from their faith community, individuals are more likely to seek out help without any reservation.