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Mind and Body Medicine: Is Prayer an Alternative Treatment?

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Mind and Body Medicine: Is Prayer an Alternative Treatment?

The College at Brockport, State University of New York

Presenter: Betty Ralph

Mentor: Barbara Thompson



Introduction

My research involves exploring Mind and Body alternative medicine. Through a literature analysis, I will examine the relationship between prayer and healing. Research shows that most individuals who have been hospitalized either believe or have prayed for improved health. If there is a significant relationship between prayer and healing, it is necessary to ask the following questions: When should prayer be offered? Should it be planned? Should prayer be a choice? These are questions that would need to be taken into consideration if this treatment is to be implemented.

Research question

What is the effect of prayer in comparison to no prayer on healing someone who is ill?

Sample

I reviewed 8 journal articles that fit a pre-determined criteria; adult patients with compromised mental, physical and spiritual health, of all genders, and of various backgrounds.

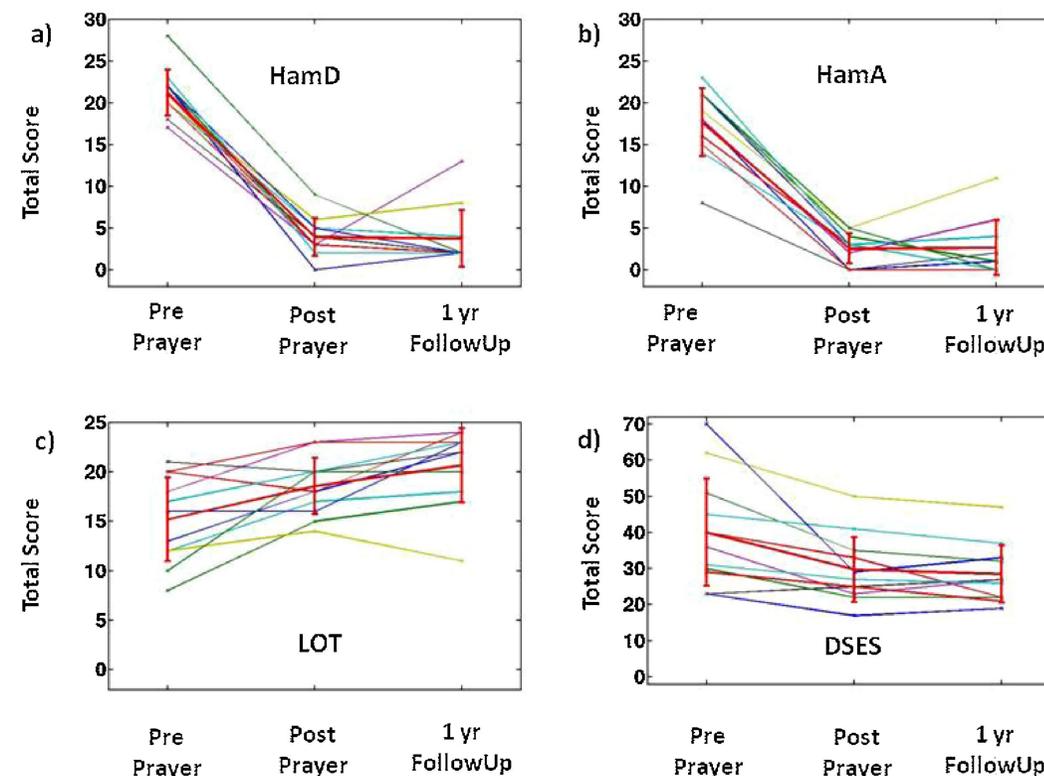
Limitations

- Sample sizes were not large enough
- Recruitment of participants done at churches
- Researchers reported missing data; this could've led to a biased report of information
- Only participants who completed the studies were included in the analysis
- Little was reported about life events that may have affected participants spiritual, physical/ mental health such as: changes in marital statuses, economical status or family events

Methodology

One method used was an in depth literature review. I gathered information from databases such as CINAHL and Medline. To do so I used different keywords such as “prayer and healing” or “mental health and Mind/Body Medicine” to get insight on my specific topic. The articles I included were ones that were published between the years 2012 and 2017, these articles were also primary research studies and compared the relationship between Prayer and Healing. Articles that did not fit these criteria were excluded from my literature review.

Data



Results

- Most studies showed increased healing with prayer
- In one particular study there was a significant decrease in the participants Hamilton depression and anxiety scores indicating a decrease in depression and anxiety with prayer
- There were increases in the participants Life Orientation Scores which indicate an increase in optimism and a decrease in pessimism
- There was an overall decrease in the participants Daily Spiritual Experience score, which indicated an increase in spirituality, more distinct awareness and comfort in a higher power



Conclusions

- Research confirms that there is a relationship between healing and prayer.
- Current research is unable to determine whether or not this is direct and casual relationship.
- Further research should be conducted to gain more insight on the correlation between prayer and healing.
- The articles reviewed showed that women are more likely to show increased healing with prayer. There is not research to explain this phenomenon but it may be due to fact that the majority of the participants were women.

Recommendations

- Health care providers can therapeutically communicate with patients and be sure to provide patient centered care.
- If individual patients have a spiritual or religious preference HCP can make sure to offer intercessory prayer.
- More research can be done to examine if prayer reflects gender differences.

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