



Association between death anxiety and various aspects of spiritual experiences among elderly people in Iran

Mina Taghiabadi¹, Kiana Babaie², Tayebe Mehrabi³, Shima Shaermoghadam⁴,
Seyed Reza Mirhafez⁵✉

Background: death anxiety is considered as one of the complicated, significant and multi-dimensional issues in old age. Understanding this behavior and its different aspects will help to choose a better solution in order to confront it. **Purpose:** This study was conducted to examine the association between death anxiety and different aspects of spiritual experiences in order to determine the mechanisms of spirituality impact on death anxiety. **Methods:** this cross-sectional study is a descriptive-analytical research which was conducted on 190 elderlies attending Neyshabur health care centers during 4 months of fall and winter 2016. Participants answered two questionnaires about spiritual experiences (16 items) and death anxiety (27 items). Data was analyzed by SPSS, 16 using analytical and descriptive statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient, mean and standard deviation). **Findings:** the results showed that among subscales of spiritual experiences, the fear of sufferings after death and fear of sudden death had the highest and lowest frequency (41.5% and 9.3%), respectively. Contact with God constituted a major part of daily spiritual experiences among elderly (48.6%). A significant and reverse association was only observed between contact with God and fear of suffering after death. **Conclusion:** the study shows that contact with God, through certain religious rites or in a form of a personal experience, could diminish death anxiety among elderly since it displays reliance on a higher power. This finding could be used to reinforce this correlation for reducing various stressors during this period of life and achieving mental health among elderlies.

INTRODUCTION

Death anxiety is defined as an unusual fear of death along with feelings about the horror of death or anxiety when thinking about dying process or things and events happening after death (1), which could be expected to have considerable effects on different aspects of one's life. Some studies show that 29.6% of patients with epilepsy, 69% of consultant's experience moderate and high levels of death anxiety and overall, 16% of people have death anxiety and 3% have morbid anxiety in this regard (2). Although death is an unavoidable stage in life which all humans should face at some point in their life, but the significance of this issue is much higher in old people since they cannot expect to live as long as younger people (3, 4). Also, the way of accepting death is an important developmental issue for elderly (5-7) because it plays a major role in attainment of integrity versus despair in last stage of social-emotional maturity and experiences regarding death and attitudes and reactions to

death among elderly(8). But it is not clear what is about the death that terrifies people the most. Is it the consequences of death? Dying by others? Sudden death? Or fear of spiritual torment after death? Death anxiety is a multidimensional issue with different perceptions among different people and the behavior of people when facing death is complicated and diverse (9, 10). Understanding this behavior given various aspects of this anxiety leads to better solutions for confronting the issue (11). Also, due to unchangeable nature of this stressful factor, most elderly try to emotionally avoid this situation or increasingly use philosophical and spiritual beliefs to help them to deal with this uncontrollable condition (12).

Many research papers exist regarding death anxiety and its association with different variables including religion and spirituality (13-23). Less attention has been directed towards different conceptualizations regarding spirituality including sense of meaning and purpose in life, relationship with self, environment or a higher power and belief in a uniting power (24) and also about the fact that it includes experiences about personal attachment to a higher power such as "feeling the presence of god", and experiences about a more general sense of unity such as "relationship with god" and also "responsibility towards others", particularly among elderly (25). This implies the fact that spirituality as a broad and comprehensive concept is less addressed

¹Department of Nursing & operating room, Neyshabur University of Medical Sciences, Neyshabur, Iran; ²Department of Anesthesia, Neyshabur University of Medical Sciences, Neyshabur, Iran; ³Psychiatric, Nursing & Midwifery Care Research Center, faculty of nursing and midwifery, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran; ⁴Department of Nursing, Neyshabur University of Medical Sciences, Neyshabur, Iran; ⁵Department of Basic Medical Sciences, Neyshabur University of Medical sciences, Neyshaur Iran;

✉Corresponding Author: Seyed Reza Mirhafez, Department of Basic Medical Sciences, Neyshabur University of Medical Sciences, Neyshabur. Iran; Tel: +985142254176, Email: Mirhafezr@num.s.ac.ir

as opposed to religiosity (26). Given the fact that spiritual experiences are more predominant issues in old age with effects on death anxiety, in this study, we aimed to examine the association of subscales of spiritual experiences including connection with god, which one of its religious aspects and symbols is prayer, feeling the presence of God which is more an internal feeling and belief that God always views human behaviors and feeling responsible toward others which is indicative of internalization of spirituality and feeling responsible toward other peoples' lives. with various aspects of death anxiety (fear of death consequences, fear of sudden death, fear of dying by others, fear of spiritual torment after death), (27). Because care for the elderly and in relation to death requires that one's attention be drawn to the perception and attitude of the individual about this experience, and a more complete understanding of this approach will provide comprehensive care, so we decided study how to communicate the relationship between the dimensions of Spirituality experiences with different aspects of death anxiety.

METHOD

This is a descriptive- analytical study and questionnaires were distributed among a convenience sample of 250 participants using quota sampling method. Of 250 invited individuals, 190 elderly visiting health and medical centers of Neyshabur City, Iran, aged 60-93 years without any physical and mental disorder with no stressful incident through last year were included in the final analysis.

Daily spiritual experiences scale (DSES) was used to assess spirituality. This scale consists of 16 items developed by Underwood and Teresi in 2002 for multi-dimensional evaluation of spirituality (28). Concepts such as perceived connection with God, inner balance, fear, gratitude and forgiveness are evaluated through this scale. Using a Likert scoring system, the overall score ranges from 16.6 to 96 with higher scores indicating more spiritual experiences. The internal consistency reliability estimate with alpha coefficient was 0.91 which is very high and it was significant at $p < 0.001$ and also, good construct validity was shown for this instrument.

Death anxiety scale consisting of 27 items was used to assess the signs of death anxiety. This scale was developed by Saffari et al in 2017 with 4 main components including fear of death consequences, fear of being killed, fear of punishment after death and fear of sudden death (29). The validity of this scale by factor analysis method was reported to be 0.85 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. A 5-point Likert scale is used for scoring and the sum of scores indicates the level of death anxiety (0-27 very low death anxiety, 28-44 low death anxiety, 45-63 medium death anxiety, 64-81 high death anxiety, 82- 108 very high death anxiety).

The main investigator visited health and medical centers in certain times of the day and the aim of the research was explained and informed consent was obtained and data was collected. Analysis was performed by SPSS, 16 software package and descriptive and analytical tests were used.

RESULTS

The mean age of study participants was 68.18 (7.13) and majority of sample (28.9%) had only reading and writing literacy. 44.2% were retired. 34.2% were living with their family and 57.4% were of average economic status based on income level. Results showed that amongst sub-scales of death anxiety, 41.5% of participants were scared of spiritual suffering after death. Anxiety in 40.3% was associated with fear of dying consequences. Also, 20.6% were anxious about dying by

others and in 9.3%; death anxiety was related to fear of sudden death. Regarding sub-scales of spiritual experiences, 48.6% had experienced the presence of god. Connection with god and responsibility towards others were found in 25.2% and 9%, respectively (Table 1, Figure 1).

The results of one-way ANOVA showed that the mean score of death anxiety across levels of education had significant differences ($p < 0.05$). Also, only among those with bachelor's degree or higher, the degree of death anxiety is lower and no significant difference was observed for other groups. In addition, the mean score of death anxiety showed no significant difference across levels of employment status and family composition ($p > 0.05$). Significant differences were observed regarding mean score of death anxiety in various levels of marital status ($p < 0.05$). Post hoc analysis showed that only unmarried persons had lower levels of death anxiety as compared to others (Table 2).

Kruskal-Wallis analysis showed that the mean score of spiritual experiences was significantly different across various levels of education status ($p > 0.05$). Tamhane's test indicated that with increased level of education, the degree of spiritual experiences was diminished. The results of the same test showed that the mean score of spiritual experiences was significantly different across levels of employment status and family composition ($p < 0.05$). Tukey test indicated higher levels of spiritual experiences among retired members of the family. However, the mean score of spiritual experiences across different levels of family composition, marital and economical status showed no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) (Table 3).

Analysis of association between sub-scales of death anxiety and spiritual experiences only indicted significant relationship between fear of spiritual suffering after death and fear of god ($R = 0.16$, $P = 0.02$) (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

Based on the present results, fear of spiritual suffering after death has a more distinct role as compared to other sub-scales of death anxiety. This may be related to the fear of unknown and the theory developed by Niemir (1994) stating that death anxiety is a function of perceived inconsistency between self and one's own ideals and inability to anticipate death reality in context of present life (30). Studies describe death anxiety mostly as physical and meta-physical changes (imaginary or non-imaginary) occurring in death which could explain why this aspect of death anxiety indicated the highest mean score among others (31). This finding is supported by the results from a study by Henrie and Patrich, 2014 which showed that fear of pain after death and losing the integrity of body were the major parts of death anxiety (32). Although, a study by Missler (2012) demonstrated that elderly residents in care facilities gained lower scores in subscale of fear of unknown as compared to other scales such as fear of loved ones death and fear of dying process (4).

This study was conducted in Netherland and people are realistic and pragmatic in this country, they have skeptical views in life and intend to give acceptable answers in response to this type of fear due to their sociability tendency, they are obviously different from Iranian Muslims with distinct religious context and beliefs.

Amongst subscales of spiritual experiences, feeling the presence of god had the highest score. In a study by Bernstein (2012) to examine spirituality among HIV-positive adolescents, feeling the presence of god (mean: 3.95 vs 2.83) had more prominent role as compared to other items including abandonment by God and being part of a higher power (33). However, among old people with arthritis rheumatoid in a study by

Figure 1. Frequency each the sub-scales of spiritual experiences and death anxiety (%)

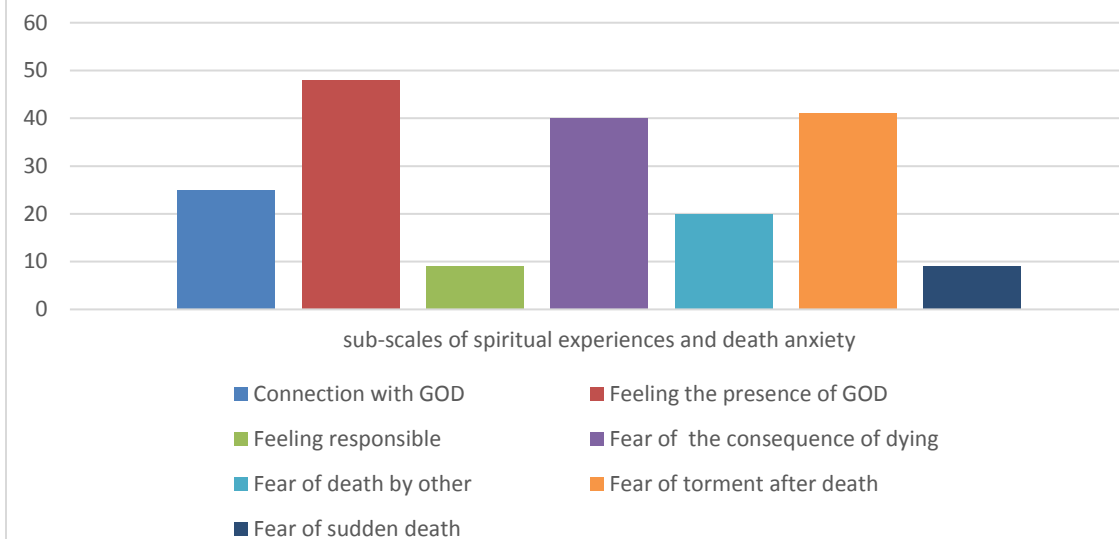


Table 1 Mean, SD and relative frequency each the sub-scales of spiritual experiences and death anxiety

Variable	max	min	Mean $\pm$ SD	Percentage
Connection with GOD	25.2	10	22.2 $\pm$ 2.59	25.2
Feeling the presence of GOD	48.6	13.5	38 $\pm$ 6.3	48.6
Feeling responsible	9	1.5	6.9 $\pm$ 1.6	9
Fear of the consequence of dying	40.3	0	23.7 $\pm$ 10.7	40.4
Fear of death by other	20	0	11.3 $\pm$ 5.8	20.6
Fear of torment after death	41.5	0	7.7 $\pm$ 6.9	41.5
Fear of sudden death	9.3	0	5 $\pm$ 2.7	9.3

Table 2 Correlation of death anxiety with demographic variables

Variables		Mean $\pm$ SD	P value
Sex	men	58.7 $\pm$ 19.2	0.400
	female	55.3 $\pm$ 24	
Level of Education	illiterate	70 $\pm$ 28.5	0.003
	Reading & writing	54 $\pm$ 23.4	
	Under Diploma	53 $\pm$ 22.1	
	Diploma	58.6 $\pm$ 21.1	
	Advanced Diploma	51.2 $\pm$ 20.1	
	BA and higher	37.3 $\pm$ 22.4	
Employment status	unemployed	65.8 $\pm$ 19.7	0.120
	employer	46.7 $\pm$ 28.1	
	worker	76.5 $\pm$ 35.4	
	Self-employer	51.8 $\pm$ 35.3	
	retired	53.8 $\pm$ 25.3	
	House wife	57.9 $\pm$ 19.8	
Family composition	With wife	58.8 $\pm$ 25.9	0.110
	With wife & children	57 $\pm$ 21.4	
	Other relatives	80 $\pm$ 39.5	

	alone	52±25.3	
Marital status	Widow	60±23.3	0.009
	single	34±21.1	
	divorced	59±26.8	
	Married	58.5±24.3	
Economic situation	good	61.8±27.5	0.500
	Average	56.2±21.7	
	Weak	55.3±28.6	

Table 3 Correlation of spiritual experiences with demographic variables

Variables		Mean Rank	P value
Sex	men	78	0.410
	female	77	
Level of Education	illiterate	62.2	0.030
	Reading & writing	73.3	
	Under diploma	68.2	
	diploma	87.6	
	Advance diploma	102.4	
	BA or higher	96.6	
Employment status	Employer	64.7	0.040
	Worker	45.8	
	Self-employer	71.8	
	Retired	89.8	
	House Wife	76.3	
	Workless	57.8	
Family composition	With wife	73.6	0.730
	alone	76	
	With wife and children	82.9	
	Other relatives	70.6	
Marital status	single	96.5	0.110
	Married	79.2	
	widow	78.9	
	Divorced	115.7	
Economic situation	good	84.7	0.500
	Average	76.7	
	weak	74.4	

Table 4 Relationship between subscales of spiritual experience and death anxiety

Variables	Fear of the consequence of dying		Fear of death by other		Fear of torment after death		Fear of sudden death	
	P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R
Connection with GOD	0.700	-0.02	0.600	-0.03	0.020**	-0.16	0.900	0.003
Feeling the presence of GOD	0.600	-0.04	0.700	-0.02	0.200	-0.08	0.500	0.04
Feeling responsible for other	0.500	-0.05	0.600	-0.03	0.800	-0.01	0.640	0.03

**P<0.05

mcCAULE (2008), connection with god consisted 79.58% of spiritual experiences of the study participants (34).

A major inconsistency exists among studies since there are evidence suggesting that the role of religious activities and important aspects of religion and spirituality may be dependent on cultural and social aspects. However, based on Underwood study, it could be stated that some people experience the relationship with higher power as an important

part of life and as such, they are actively engaged with holy power not only in stressful moments but also through important life events (28).

No correlation between spiritual experiences score and variables of family composition and marital status was observed but death anxiety and marital status were associated and lower death anxiety was reported among unmarried individuals. Lower death anxiety among unmarried individual in old age which we observed in the present study could be

because that fear of losing loved ones and concerns about the effect of one's own death on others are not present since unmarried individuals in old age have fewer attachments and concerns are less among them. A significant difference was observed between the mean scores of spiritual experiences and death anxiety in terms of education level and with higher education, lower spiritual experiences were observed and individuals with bachelor's degree and higher had less anxiety regarding death. In a study by Mahboub et al., (2014) no association between education and spirituality was observed and people with university degree had lower death anxiety scores (35). However, Kalkstein et al. (2009) showed a reverse association between daily spiritual experiences and education level (36). A reason for this reverse association is that people with higher education start to question their fundamental beliefs and therefore they abandon key religious and spiritual values. Another reason could be the effects of academic researches especially in the field of natural sciences. With greater reliance on intellectual abilities, control over approaches which were once out of reach become possible and belief in higher power diminishes (36). In a study by Azaiza et al. (2010) among Israel Muslim elderly, it was shown that persons without any education had higher anxiety regarding death and dying (37) while Mahboub et al., (2014) showed no association between education and death anxiety which is inconsistent with the present study (35). It could be because this study was conducted among university students with no difference in terms of education level. Also, in the present study, retired persons were of higher spiritual experiences as compared to other groups. Earl (2010) in Australia did a study examining the role of spirituality in the process of retirement and showed that spirituality plays an important role during planning and preparing for retirement. Retirement is a transition stage in life and may be one of the most important events during old age with effects on life style or social-mental adaptability just like other transitional experiences. Therefore, in many cases, they use spirituality as an adaptation mechanism in face of this transition and this may be the reason for higher reliance on spiritual experiences during this stage of life (38).

The results showed that connection with god negatively predicted fear of spiritual suffering after death. Studies indicate that certain feelings associated with this part of spiritual experiences scale such as experiences during connection with god (when praying or other times when I am in connection with god, I experience a feeling of joy which keeps away daily worries) and guidance by god (I feel that god guides me though daily activities) reduce psychological stress (39-41). Meaning and purpose in life, the feel of belonging to a higher source and hope in assistance by god through life hard times are among sources that people with a high level of relationship with god could use to suffer less during stressful life events. Research has always shown that old people admit to the effect of religious faith on life more than younger counterparts and try to carry out religious actions and one of the manifestations of religious faith is contact with God (2, 42, 43). Death and afterlife are among life stressors and have always been a mystery to humans and efforts through centuries have been unable to draw a clear picture about these issues. Therefore, considering the complicated and unknown nature of death, humans try to overcome these stressors through searching for a higher power. Considering the fact that values, beliefs and spiritual experiences are internal in nature, quantitative studies are obviously accompanied by errors and shortcomings. Therefore, it is suggested that these values and beliefs are examined through qualitative study designs in future in order to achieve more precise insight regarding the associations.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study showed that fear of spiritual suffering after death, as a major part of death anxiety, is negatively associated with connection with god. This means that this relationship, which could be through a certain religious ceremony or in a form of a personal experience, is effective in reducing death anxiety among elderly because it is associated with the concept of relying on a higher power. This finding could be used to enforce this connection in order to lower various stressors in this life period and to reach social maturity in old people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was conducted as a part of a master's thesis supported by Isfahan University of Medical Sciences and Neyshabur University of Medical Sciences. We would like to thank all participants who patiently helped us through this work. Also, we would like to thank Mr. Kavosi for their valuable comments on this work.

REFERENCES

- Gordon R. Dying and creating: A search for meaning: Routledge; 2018.
- Yang K-P, Mao X-Y. A study of nurses' spiritual intelligence: A cross-sectional questionnaire survey. *International journal of nursing studies*. 2007; 44(6):999-1010.
- Doka KJ, Morgan JD. Death and spirituality: Routledge; 2016.
- Missler M, Stroebe M, Geurtsen L, Mastenbroek M, Chmoun S, Van Der Houwen K. Exploring death anxiety among elderly people: A literature review and empirical investigation. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*. 2012; 64(4):357-79.
- Edo-Gual M, Tomás-Sábado J, Bardallo-Porras D, Monforte-Royo C. The impact of death and dying on nursing students: an explanatory model. *Journal of clinical nursing*. 2014;23(23-24):3501-12.
- Scher CS. Would You Recommend Accepting a "Donation After Cardiac Death" Liver? You're Wrong, I'm Right: Springer; 2017. p. 221-3.
- Breitbart W. Spirituality and meaning in supportive care: spirituality- and meaning-centered group psychotherapy interventions in advanced cancer. *Supportive care in cancer*. 2002;10(4):272-80.
- Nakagi S, Tada T. Relationship between identity and attitude toward death in Japanese senior citizens. *The Journal of Medical Investigation*. 2014;61(1.2):103-17.
- Varese F. Mafia Life: Love, Death, and Money at the Heart of Organized Crime: Oxford University Press; 2018.
- Robben AC. Death, mourning, and burial: a cross-cultural reader: John Wiley & Sons; 2017.
- Shimomai K, Furukawa H, Kuroda Y, Fukuda K, Masuda M, Koizumi J. The Difficulty of Selecting the NANDA-I Nursing Diagnosis (2015-2017) of "Death Anxiety" in Japan. *International journal of nursing knowledge*. 2018;29(1):4-10.
- Cheng FK. Buddhist insights into life and death: Overcoming death anxiety. *Athens Journal of Social Sciences*. 2017;4(1):67-87.
- Trevino KM, Pargament KI, Krause N, Ironson G, Hill P. Stressful Events and Religious/Spiritual Struggle: Moderating Effects of the General Orienting System. 2017.
- Flannely KJ. Religion and Death Anxiety. *Religious Beliefs, Evolutionary Psychiatry, and Mental Health in America*: Springer; 2017. p. 153-64.
- Lerman S, Jung M, Arredondo EM, Barnhart JM, Cai J, Castañeda SF, et al. Religiosity prevalence and its association with depression and anxiety symptoms among Hispanic/Latino adults. *PloS one*. 2018;13(2):e0185661.
- Bernard M, Strasser F, Gamondi C, Braunschweig G, Forster M, Kaspers-Elekes K, et al. Relationship between spirituality, meaning in life, psychological distress, wish for hastened death, and their

- influence on quality of life in palliative care patients. *Journal of pain and symptom management*. 2017;54(4):514-22.
17. Dadfar M, Lester D, Bahrami F. Death anxiety, reliability, validity, and factorial structure of the Farsi form of the Arabic scale of death anxiety in Iranian old-aged persons. *Journal of aging research*. 2016;2016.
 18. Dadfar M, Bahrami F. Reliability and factorial structure of the farsi version of the Arabic scale of death anxiety in an iranian middle-aged sample. *The Scientific World Journal*. 2016;2016.
 19. Sharif Nia H, Ebadi A, Lehto RH, Peyrovi H. The experience of death anxiety in Iranian war veterans: a phenomenology study. *Death studies*. 2015;39(5):281-7.
 20. Bitarafan L, Kazemi M, Yousefi Afrashte M. Relationship Between Styles of Attachment to God and Death Anxiety Resilience in the Elderly. *Iranian Journal of Ageing*. 2018;12(4):446-57.
 21. Mohammadpour A, Sadeghmoghadam L, Shareinia H, Jahani S, Amir F. Investigating the role of perception of aging and associated factors in death anxiety among the elderly. *Clinical interventions in aging*. 2018;13:405.
 22. Majidi A, Moradi O. Effect of Teaching the Components of Spiritual Intelligence on Death Anxiety in the Elderly. *Iranian Journal of Ageing*. 2018;13(1):110-23.
 23. Darban F, Karamzahi R, Balouchi A, Safarzai E, Salehian T, Hoseynzahi M, et al. The relationship between social intelligence and death anxiety among elderly people living in Iranshahr, Iran. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*. 2016;14(6):896-900.
 24. Ng S-M, Fong TC, Tsui EY, Au-Yeung FS, Law SK. Validation of the Chinese Version of Underwood's Daily Spiritual Experience Scale—Transcending Cultural Boundaries? *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. 2009;16(2):91-7.
 25. Edmondson D, Park CL, Chaudoir SR, Wortmann JH. Death Without God: Religious Struggle, Death Concerns, and Depression in the Terminally Ill. *Psychological Science*. 2008;19(8):754-8.
 26. Park CL. Religiousness/spirituality and health: A meaning systems perspective. *Journal of behavioral medicine*. 2007;30(4):319-28.
 27. Depaola SJ, Griffin M, Young JR, Neimeyer RA. Death anxiety and attitudes toward the elderly among older adults: The Role of gender and ethnicity. *Death Studies*. 2003;27(4):335-54.
 28. Underwood LG, Teresi JA. The daily spiritual experience scale: Development, theoretical description, reliability, exploratory factor analysis, and preliminary construct validity using health-related data. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. 2002;24(1):22-33.
 29. Saffari M, Amini H, Sheykh-oliya Z, Pakpour AH, Koenig HG. Validation of the Persian version of the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES) in Pregnant Women: A Proper Tool to Assess Spirituality Related to Mental Health. *Journal of religion and health*. 2017;56(6):2222-36.
 30. Neimeyer RA. *Death anxiety handbook: Research, instrumentation, and application*: Taylor & Francis; 2015.
 31. Moreno RP, De La Fuente Solana EI, Rico MA, Fernández LML. Death anxiety in institutionalized and non-institutionalized elderly people in Spain. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*. 2009;58(1):61-76.
 32. Henrie J, Patrick JH. Religiousness, religious doubt, and death anxiety. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*. 2014;78(3):203-27.
 33. Bernstein K, D'Angelo LJ, Lyon ME. An exploratory study of HIV+ adolescents' spirituality: Will you pray with me? *Journal of religion and health*. 2013;52(4):1253-66.
 34. McCauley J, Tarpley MJ, Haaz S, Bartlett SJ. Daily spiritual experiences of older adults with and without arthritis and the relationship to health outcomes. *Arthritis Care & Research: Official Journal of the American College of Rheumatology*. 2008;59(1):122-8.
 35. Mahboub M, Ghahramani F, Shamohammadi Z, Parazdeh S. Relationship between daily spiritual experiences and fear of death in hemodialysis patients. *Journal of Biology and Today's World*. 2014;3(1):7-11.
 36. Kalkstein S, Tower RB. The Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale and well-being: Demographic comparisons and scale validation with older Jewish adults and a diverse internet sample. *Journal of Religion and Health*. 2009;48(4):402.
 37. Azaiza F, Ron P, Shoham M, Gigini I. Death and dying anxiety among elderly Arab Muslims in Israel. *Death Studies*. 2010;34(4):351-64.
 38. Earl JK. The contribution of spirituality to the process of retirement. *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*. 2010;7(3):223-40.
 39. Chiesa A, Serretti A. Mindfulness-based stress reduction for stress management in healthy people: a review and meta-analysis. *The journal of alternative and complementary medicine*. 2009;15(5):593-600.
 40. Astin JA. Stress reduction through mindfulness meditation. *Psychotherapy and psychosomatics*. 1997;66(2):97-106.
 41. Rosenzweig S, Reibel DK, Greeson JM, Brainard GC, Hojat M. Mindfulness-based stress reduction lowers psychological distress in medical students. *Teaching and learning in medicine*. 2003;15(2):88-92.
 42. McEwan W. Spirituality in nursing: What are the issues? *Orthopaedic Nursing*. 2004;23(5):321-6.43.
 43. Wong KF, Yau SY. Nurses' experiences in spirituality and spiritual care in Hong Kong. *Applied Nursing Research*. 2010;23(4):242-4.

Article Key words

Death Anxiety; Spiritual Experiences; Elderly

Grant

This study was support by a grant from Neyshabur University of Medical Sciences.

Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

Ethical approval

The present research approved by ethics committee of Neyshabur University of Medical Sciences. Ethics code: 394720

Article History

Received: 12 June 2018

Accepted: 19 July 2018

Published: September-October 2018

Citation

Mina Taghiabadi, Kiana Babaie, Tayebe Mehrabi, Shima Shaermoghadam, Seyed Reza Mirhafez. Association between death anxiety and various aspects of spiritual experiences among elderly people in Iran. *Medical Science*, 2018, 22(93), 478-483

Publication License



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

General Note

Article is recommended to print as color digital version in recycled paper. *Save trees, save nature*