



# Care of the Aged, Women’s Health, and Measuring Religion, Spirituality and Health

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## Abstract

This issue of *JORH* explores various concerns related to the care of the elderly within a number of countries (namely China, India, Iran, Israel, Turkey, USA). Issues relating to Women’s Health are also considered across the life span but particularly with regard to gynaecology, paediatrics, cancer, mental health and wellbeing. Research is presented on the empirical measurement of religion, spirituality and health with scales developed and/or tested in Iran, India, Haiti, Taiwan, Jordan and the Netherlands. Finally, readers are reminded of the 9th European Congress on Religion, Spirituality and Health (ECRSH) during May 2024, 16-18th at the Paracelsus Medical University in Salzburg, Austria.

**Keywords** Elderly · Women · Religion · Spirituality · Health · Measurement

## Introduction

The World Health Organization has projected that by 2050 the number of people aged 80 years or older will have tripled to reach 426 million (WHO, 2023). The impact of such a shift, financially, structurally, and societally has attracted much discussion; however, the reality remains that there is no typical “old person” just as there is no typical care model, with multiple countries offering diverse approaches to care — some of which have been explored in articles published within *JORH* over the last 60 years. The world’s aging population, however, should not be considered a problem to be solved – but rather a commitment to be met and that commitment demands new approaches including those explored below.

Previous *JORH* issues have raised concerns about ‘population ageing’ (JORH, 2020, 2021a, 2022a). This issue commences with care topics relating to: (i) religiosity and depression among community-dwelling older adults in India, (ii) religious

and spiritual coping in dealing with chronic diseases among older Iranian Zoroastrians, (iii) a review of the effect of religious/spiritual education and care on the life quality of Iranian elderly; (iv) a cross-sectional study exploring spirituality and attitudes toward death among older adults in rural and urban China; (v) views of family members who take care of elderly persons with regard to ageism, spirituality, and death in Turkey; (vi) the psychological and spiritual well-being of older adults with rheumatoid arthritis in Turkey; (vii) the relationship between spiritual well-being, life satisfaction and hope in elderly individuals in Turkey; (viii) health and well-being among the aged in a Jerusalem religious community; (ix) the mediating role that religion plays in the living arrangements and subjective well-being of elderly Chinese Tibetans; and lastly (x) a faith-based health promotion program called ‘NEWSTART’ to reduce chronic disease risk factors in the USA.

## Women’s Health

Women’s health issues have been considered within previous issues of JORH (JORH, 2021a, 2022b). This issue contains the largest number of articles published in one JORH issue and covers a wide variety of women’s health issues across a number of nations ranging across the female life span. The topics in this issue include: (i) Muslim women’s beliefs about menstruation in Turkey; (ii) prenatal tests undertaken by Muslim women undergoing IVF treatment in Israel; (iii) prenatal testing and pregnancy termination among Muslim women living in Israel giving birth to a child afflicted with a genetic disease; (iv) attitudes of different religions toward surrogacy; (v) the relationship between the psychological distress and spiritual well-being in pregnant women exposed to domestic violence in Iran; (vi) spiritual experiences of Portuguese women having a “water birth”; (vii) evaluation of midwives’ perceptions of spirituality and spiritual care in Aydin, Turkey; (viii) spiritual intelligence as a coping strategy for managing job stress among midwives in northern Iran; (ix) the relationship between religious attitude and postpartum physical and perineal pain in Iran; and (x) postpartum depression in various sects of the ultra-orthodox society in Israel.

Beyond early developmental and faith issues, this issue also considers women’s health in relation to (xi) spiritual coping styles and hope levels in mothers with disabled children in Turkey; (xii) factors contributing to the life satisfaction of young Israeli modern orthodox women; (xiii) personality, religiosity and satisfaction with life in young Muslim and Christian women in Pakistan; (xiv) sexual function, religion, existential well-being and mental health among married women of reproductive age in Iran; (xv) identifying systemic factors when counselling Black women of Christian faith in the USA; (xvi) qualitative inquiry of African-American female church leaders on facilitators and barriers with regard to adult health programs; (xvii) factors influencing cervical cancer prevention behaviors among conservative Muslim American women in Virginia; (xviii) worry among US female first-degree relatives of women with breast cancer; and lastly (xix) online apparel forums and physical activity for women with religious-based modesty preferences.

## Measuring Religion, Spirituality and Health

Over the last several years, *JORH* has brought together a number of research articles relating to the development and psychometric assessment of scales measuring religion and/or spirituality (JORH, 2021b, 2022b, 2023). This issue commences with two preliminary articles (i) identifying some of the leading global contributors to scholarship in religion journals and (ii) training researchers in the field of religion, spirituality, and health. This section then proceeds to explore the latest measures for assessing religion and spirituality in different countries, namely (iii) the development and psychometric validation of the nurses' spiritual sensitivity scale in Southeastern Iran; (iv) assessment of psychometric properties of the Persian version of the spiritual well-being scale among Iranian potential organ donors; (v) assessment of the psychometric properties of the Turkish version of the nurse spiritual therapeutic scale for oncology patients and caregivers; (vi) assessment of the Polish 14-item version of the religious and spiritual struggles scale (RSS-14); (vii) validation of the transpersonal gratitude scale (TGS) and examination of the relationship between transpersonal gratitude, spiritual well-being and distress in India; (viii) the development and validation of Hindu gratitude scale (hgs-15); (ix) assessment of the psychometric properties of the Haitian creole brief religious coping scale (RCOPE); (x) psychometric validation of the Spiritual Coping Strategies Scale—Chinese version (SCSS-C) for adults in Taiwan; (xi) psychometric validation of the Persian version of the spiritual well-being scale among Iranian potential organ donors; (xii) development and validation of a Jordanian measure of reverence in Muslim praying ('khushoo'); and lastly (xiii), examination of a new way of assessing the emotional dimensions of religiosity and spirituality in a Dutch psychiatric population.

## Epilogue and ERSCH Congress 2024

The *JORH* Editors anticipate that readers and researchers will again benefit from this collection of research articles. Looking ahead, the Editors wish to draw your attention to the 9th European Congress on Religion, Spirituality and Health (ECRSH) during May 2024, 16-18th at the Paracelsus Medical University in Salzburg, Austria.

Spiritual Care as a scientific and clinical field is gaining momentum in Europe as well as worldwide thereby bringing together pastoral and medical care. Evidence based spiritual care interventions are at the cutting edge of this development. The ECRSH seeks to present and discuss state of the art interventions in spiritual care from a scientific and clinical point of view and invites researchers, health care professionals and chaplains/spiritual carers to contribute to the conference. Two of the Editors of *JORH* will be presenting at ECRSH (namely Prof. Harold Koenig and Associate Prof. Lindsay Carey). For more information see [www.ecrsh.eu](http://www.ecrsh.eu).

Finally, we would like to remind readers to submit articles on the topic of religion, spirituality, and Parkinson's Disease for a special issue on this topic.

## Parkinson's Disease

*JORH* continues the call for papers regarding Parkinson's Disease – the final deadline is 15th October 2023. Please refer to the following link for greater detail: <https://www.springer.com/journal/10943/updates/24079232>.

If you would like to make a submission, please submit via the Editorial Manager on the *JORH* web site: <https://www.springer.com/journal/10943/submission-guidelines>.

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