Depression in College: How Does Religiosity Help?

Preliminary Findings
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Background

- **Depression:** More than 1 million college students diagnosed
- **Suicide:** Over 10% seriously consider, 2nd leading cause of death in college students
- **Treatment:** 6% of college students report taking antidepressants, 70% of depressed clients fail to experience remission after initial round of antidepressant therapy

American College Health Association, 2006; Aina & Susman, 2006; Trivedi et al., 2006 (STAR*D Trials)
Problem

- Although treatment success is growing, depression remains a serious problem for college students. Alternative/adjunctive approaches to prevention and treatment are needed.
- Religiosity & Spirituality may represent a source of help for college students exposed or vulnerable to depression.

Pervasiveness of Religion in American Adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGIOUSNESS</th>
<th>RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8% devoted</td>
<td>16% &gt;1/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27% regular</td>
<td>24% 1x/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12% sporadic</td>
<td>12% 2-5x/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12% disengaged</td>
<td>12% 1x/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12% other</td>
<td>12% &lt;1x/month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smith & Denton, 2006
**Definitions**

- **Religiousness** — a commitment to that which is sacred
- **Religiosity** — a multidimensional construct characterized by measurable human phenomena reflecting levels of religiousness (quality, state, or degree)
- **Spiritual-ness** — a search for that which is sacred
Purpose

To test an explanatory model of depression where religiosity represents a potential protective factor, cognitive style represents a known risk factor, and perceived stress a known predictor.

Explanation & Prediction

Design

- Face to face recruiting
- Web-based survey technology
- Pro-rated incentive, up to $50 dollars
- 214 items at T1, 34 items at T2-T5
Preliminary Results

Description of Sample, Description of Main Variables, Relationships of Main Variables over Time

Sample

RELIgIOUS VS. PUBLIC

- Religious
- Public

RETENTION

- 78% participants completed all 6 surveys
- 86% participants completed at least 5 surveys
Religious Coping

Religious Motivation

Spiritual Meaning

Beliefs and Background

Beliefs about God

Mean Scores (sd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T6</td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression (CES-D)</td>
<td>13.2 (9.2)</td>
<td>11.7 (10.9)</td>
<td>13.6 (8.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress (PSS)</td>
<td>26.4 (8.4)</td>
<td>22.4 (8.8)</td>
<td>26.6 (7.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Vulnerability (CSQ)</td>
<td>3.8 (1.05)</td>
<td>3.5 (.96)</td>
<td>3.8 (.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Coping</td>
<td>33.3 (5.6)</td>
<td>32.9 (6.7)</td>
<td>27.6 (7.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Motivation</td>
<td>25.8 (4.5)</td>
<td>25.7 (4.2)</td>
<td>14.5 (6.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Meaning</td>
<td>69.1 (11.2)</td>
<td>69.4 (11.6)</td>
<td>42.9 (22.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs and Background</td>
<td>46.5 (7.0)</td>
<td>46.3 (7.7)</td>
<td>26.2 (12.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about God</td>
<td>22.8 (3.6)</td>
<td>23.0 (2.9)</td>
<td>16.8 (6.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All religiosity measures differ significantly between Religious and Public settings (p<.001)

CES-D, likelihood of depression: <16 low, 17-22 moderate, >22 high, 1/3 to 1/4 participants >16 across T1-T6

Depression in College: How Does Religiosity Help?
## Religious Measures

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<tr>
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<th>Religious Coping</th>
<th>Religious Motivation</th>
<th>Spiritual Meaning</th>
<th>Beliefs and Background</th>
<th>Beliefs about God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Coping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.740**</td>
<td>.780**</td>
<td>.684**</td>
<td>.649**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Motivation</td>
<td>.754**</td>
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<td>.912**</td>
<td>.852**</td>
<td>.753**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Meaning</td>
<td>.768**</td>
<td>.900**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.843**</td>
<td>.854**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beliefs and Background</td>
<td>.721**</td>
<td>.862**</td>
<td>.862**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.754**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about God</td>
<td>.622**</td>
<td>.720**</td>
<td>.827**</td>
<td>.756**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01

### Depiction

- T1
- T6

- RCOPE represents religiosity
- Religiosity and cv at T1
- All correlations significant ($p < .05$)

## Depression and Correlates

- **stress and depression**
- **religiosity and depression**
- **cv and depression**

RCOE represents religiosity
Religiosity and cv at T1
All correlations significant ($p < .05$)
Depression and Religiosity

![Graph showing the relationship between Depression and Religiosity across different time points (T1 to T6). The x-axis represents the time points, and the y-axis represents depression scores. The graph includes lines for different measures of religiosity and belief about God.]

T1 Depression by Religiosity

![Bar chart showing T1 Depression by Religiosity. The x-axis represents different religiosity measures, and the y-axis represents depression scores. The chart includes bars for low depression (Lo Depr) and high depression (Hi Depr) for each religiosity measure.]

- R. Coping
- R. Motivation
- S. Meaning
- R. Background
- Beliefs about God

*All religiosity measures at T1*
Expected relationships between depression, stress, and CV in both groups
Religiosity appeared to function as a trait
Less depressed tended to have increased levels of religiosity
Correlations between stress and depression are lower across time in those with higher levels of religious coping
Correlations between CV and depression are higher across time in those with higher levels of religious coping
Psychological vs. Theological models