

Spirituality Assessment in Pharmaceutical Practice

John W. Campbell, PhD, MBA, MS, CCC-SLP

Director of Research, Oklahoma Health Center Clinical Pastoral Education Institute, Inc.
Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor, Don W. Reynolds Department of Geriatric Medicine Associate
Director, Oklahoma Center for Neuroscience, University of Oklahoma College of Medicine

A new elective interdisciplinary course concerning spirituality in medicine was offered in the University Of Oklahoma College Of Medicine. Although many medical students attended, the majority of the student participants were pharmacy doctoral students indicating a high interest in the subject matter by pharmacy students. As more patients identify this aspect of their life in coping with medical and psychiatric illnesses as important, this subject may become increasingly important to consider in pharmacy educational curriculum. An informal survey was offered to students at the end of the course and provided insights into the perceptions of this small, initial sample of pharmacy students. Most students would ask patients about spirituality and stated comfort addressing the subject of spirituality with patients in encounters ranging from a routine visit to a life-threatening illness. The students also gave reasons for not asking a patient about spirituality. Information gained from this small sample of pharmacy students may be of interest to those involved in pharmacy curriculum development and may indicate a need for further education about spirituality, its effects on health, the use of formal spirituality assessment tools, and how to make referrals for chaplaincy care. A large survey of practicing pharmacists and their perceptions and actions in practice regarding spirituality is planned based on these initial findings.