

Spirituality Among Women Dementia Caregivers: Construct Validation of the Spiritual Perspective Scale

Nirmala Lekhak BSN, RN¹, Wichiya Yolpant, MSN, RN¹, Jaclene A. Zauszniewski, PhD, RN-BC¹, FAAN & Tirth Bhatta, MGS, Msc²
¹FPB School of Nursing, ²Department of Sociology
Case Western Reserve University

Background and Significance

- Significant number of family caregivers (most of them women) care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, so are at risk of increased stress and depressive symptoms.
- Given the positive influence of spirituality on physical and psychological well-being of caregivers, it is essential to develop a scale to assess their spirituality so that appropriate interventions could be designed and implemented.
- There exists a 10-item Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS) that measures the extent of an individual's spiritual belief and involvement in spiritual activities (Reed, 1986).
- Originally developed to measure spirituality in terminally ill hospitalized patients, there is no documented psychometric evaluation of the scale's reliability and validity among women caregivers of older adults with dementia.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the psychometric properties of the 10-item SPS to measure spirituality of women caregivers of elders with dementia.

Methods

- Data were obtained from an NIH-funded pilot trial of Resourcefulness Training with 138 women dementia caregivers; baseline data were used for this analysis.
- Participants assessed their spirituality on a 6-point response scale (1=Not at all, 2= Less than a once a year, 3= About once a year, 4= About once a month, 5= About once a week, 6= About once a day)
- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Cronbach's alpha were estimated to examine the factorial structure (i.e., inter-relationship among scale items) of the SPS scale.

Results

Factor Loadings of SPS

| Items | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|--|---------|---------|
| In talking with your family and friends, how often do you mention spiritual matters? | .73 | .73 |
| How often do you share with others the problems and joys of living according with your spiritual beliefs? | .82 | .82 |
| How often do you read spiritually related materials? | .81 | .80 |
| How often do you engage in private prayer or meditation? | .71 | .71 |
| Forgiveness is an important part of my spirituality. | .31 | ** |
| I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life. | .88 | .88 |
| My spirituality is significant part of my life. | .87 | .83 |
| I frequently feel very close to God or a "higher power" in prayer, during public worships, or at important moments in my daily life. | .80 | .80 |
| My spiritual views have had an influence upon my life. | .82 | .83 |
| My spirituality is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life. | .80 | .81 |

** Model 2, forgiveness item removed and Cronbach's α after its removal was .94

Results

Correlation of Spirituality with Psychological Well-Being

| | Spirituality |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Self-assessed Health | 0.31* |
| Resourcefulness | 0.39* |
| Depression | -0.34* |
| Negative Emotion | -0.36* |
| Perceived Stress | -0.31* |

*p < 0.01

- Reliability of SPS (Cronbach's α = 0.93) indicates strong internal consistency among scale items.
- Except for one item measuring forgiveness, inter-item correlations were greater than 0.5.
- EFA of SPS items revealed a single factorial structure measuring spirituality (with primary loadings greater than 0.7 for nine items).

Conclusions

- The findings demonstrate that the SPS is internally consistent and measures a single construct.
- This study reaffirms the construct validity of SPS scale in a new population - - women caregivers of elders with dementia - - and supports future studies of spirituality in dementia caregivers.