

# Influence of physicians' religious faith, spirituality or atheism in the physician-patient-relationship – an international comparative study

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## Background

The main project is an international study of physicians' faith and personal values, and how these values affect physician attitudes toward the religiosity and spirituality of their patients. The study will encompass physicians from six continents (Europe, North America, South America, Africa, Asia and Oceania), and primarily focus on physicians albeit other occupations like nurses and psychologists will also be included.

## Aim

The overall project will contribute with new knowledge in this field of research by analyzing existing data gathered by the collaborators of the Network of Research on Spirituality and Health (NERSH.org)(1). Research groups from six continents contribute to the network, and all have applied the Questionnaire by Curlin on local samples. See map below for location of the research groups in NERSH.



## Method

Building an international data pool of health professionals' attitudes toward religion and spirituality within health care (Project management, data management og database building)

Developing and validating scales for measuring various aspects of religiosity of health professionals (ie. "Religiosity of Health Professionals", and "Willingness to interact with patients about R/S") (Scale and psychometric instrument validation techniques, reliability analyses, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, structured equation modeling)

Cross-cultural comparative studies (Individual participant data meta-analysis – IPDMA)

Triangulated research design using an addition of interviews of physicians and patients of the Indonesian sample (qualitative research methods, semi-structured interviews)

### Project status

The International NERSH Data Pool is currently updated in its 2. version comprising data from 17 separate surveys from 12 countries. The methodology used for creating the data pool has been described in detail in a peer-reviewed publication.

The existing religiosity measure (DUREL index) has been validated across the included samples, and an addition of four new scales have been proposed and validated as well.

The first meta-analysis based on the NERSH Data Pool has been published in the journal 'Medicine' with our analysis on the self-reported influence of religious values of physicians from 7 countries.

Spawned of the work within this research field I have written and published a philosophical exploration on the potential future of value-based medical practice (ie. physician neutrality vs. influence of religious, spiritual and atheistic values)

Research stay in Indonesia in planning phase. Project description and interview guides have been approved by the local Indonesian ethics committee.

### Related publications (links)

#### Publications as first author

Kørup, A. K., Christensen, R. D., Nielsen, C. T., Søndergaard, J., AlYousefi, N. A., Lucchetti, G., ... Hvidt, N. C. (2017). The International NERSH Data Pool: A Methodological Description of a Data Pool of Religious and Spiritual Values of Health Professionals from Six Continents. *Religions*, 8(2), [24]. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8020024>

Kørup, A. K., Søndergaard, J., Lucchetti, G., Ramakrishnan, P., Baumann, K., Lee, E., ... Hvidt, N. C. (2019). Religious values of physicians affect their clinical practice: A meta-analysis of individual participant data from 7 countries. *Medicine*, 98(38), [e17265]. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MD.00000000000017265>

Kørup, A. K., Søndergaard, J., Christensen, R. D., Nielsen, C. T., Lucchetti, G., Ramakrishnan, P., ... Hvidt, N. C. (2020). Religious values in clinical practice are here to stay. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 59(1), 188-194. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0715-y>

#### Publications as co-author

Hvidt, N. C., Kørup, A. K., Curlin, F. A., Baumann, K., Frick, E., Søndergaard, J., ... Büssing, A. (2016). The NERSH International Collaboration on Values, Spirituality and Religion in Medicine: Development of Questionnaire, Description of Data Pool, and Overview of Pool Publications. *Religions*, 7(8), [107]. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel7080107>

Rasmussen, P., Johansen, C., Hvidt, N. C., Kørup, A. K., Søndergaard, J., & Thygesen, L. C. (2017). Use of Sedatives, Antidepressants and Antipsychotic Medicine among Seventh-day Adventists and Baptists in Denmark. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 56(5), 1553-1560. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-016-0331-7>

van Randwijk, C. B., Opsahl, T., Hvidt, E. A., Kørup, A. K., Bjerrum, L., Thomsen, K. F., & Hvidt, N. C. (2019). Characteristics of Religious and Spiritual Beliefs of Danish Physicians: And Likelihood of Addressing Religious and Spiritual Issues with Patients. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 58(1), 333-342. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0662-7>

Opsahl, T., Kørup, A. K., Andersen-Ranberg, K., Christensen, K., & Hvidt, N. C. (2020). Characteristics of Danish Centenarians' Religious Beliefs: A Nationwide Population-Based Study. *Journal of Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-00981-1>

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