

Cultural Issues

SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT

Spirituality as a means to support the patient is receiving increasing attention all over the world.

Multiculturality implies a great diversity of conceptions, beliefs, religions, hopes of communication and communion with Divinity. For many, spirituality is about existential questions at a personal level.

Topics for Forum:

Answer the following questions according to your own conceptions and beliefs.

- What is my connection with the world that surrounds me?
- Why me?
- Am I a good person?
- Is what is happening to me happening for a reason?
- How could I live my life in the best way possible?

Taking into consideration the spiritual needs of the patient is important in health care because it relates to the patient's perception and attitude towards the disease. The patient's spirituality may induce pessimism or optimism, which may be a determining factor in the behaviour and level of engagement when fighting the disease. In Europe and beyond, spirituality is considered a therapeutic strategy and even a clinical element. In England, according to Asma (a British citizen), where many ethnicities and religions coexist, hospitals offer inclusive spaces for manifesting spirituality in different ways. There are also Spiritual Assessment questionnaires which provide insight into the spirituality of each patient and its perceived importance. There are also many British citizens who doubt the value and effectiveness of religious faith. In Greece, says Panagiotis, an Orthodox country, there are chapels in each hospital, and the hospitals themselves are named after Orthodox saints. This is also the case in other Eastern European countries.

In Oriental countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco), Islam is the dominant religion, says Youssef. The Muslim tradition says that Allah gives the illness but also has the remedy. Thus, the Quran is considered the therapy for the soul, while the disease is a test, not a punishment. Of one thing we may be certain: in the last two decades, the medical professionals' concern for the spiritual life of the patient has increased.

Topics for Forum:

- What is your opinion regarding the involvement of the medical staff in the spiritual life of the patient?
- Are you an adept of religious behaviour in medical practice?