

European Network of Research on Religion, Spirituality and Health

Newsletter Summer 2013

Volume 8 • No. 2

Editorial

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

This newsletter presents a European research program hosted in the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS). The program aims to bring together European and international researchers, to produce comparable data on patients and care givers and to coordinate publications. The program will be described in more detail in the topic section. We thank the FRIAS Group for their contribution.

The integration of religion and spirituality into patient care will be the overall topic of the 4th European Conference on Religion, Spirituality and Health in Malta, taking place May 2014, 22-24 (see www.ecrsh.eu). The first announcement and registration will be available soon. Save the date! Take also note of the Pre-conference Research Workshop with Prof. Harold Koenig.

Further events you will find at the end of the newsletter. Please let us know about your conferences, projects and publications. Just send us an e-mail: info@rish.ch.

*Stefan Rademacher, PhD
René Hefti, MD*

Topic

European Research Program

For a considerable period of time an opposition has existed between theology and the health sector. Today the picture is changing with growing recognition that faith often plays a major role when disease and traumatic events assail people. It is easy to recognise that religious belief in various ways impacts quality of life and recovery from disease. It can do so both positively and negatively in at least three areas: in the analysis of the causes of the disease, in meaning making, and in deci-

sions regarding intervention. It is therefore of the highest importance that believers hit by calamity receive proper support by care givers both in the health and the religious sectors. Such support may be enhanced by constructive integration of knowledge between medical science, psychology and theology without hampering with the integrity of any party.

This is the background for a collaboration that has begun in 2012 in Freiburg, Germany.

The FRIAS Research Group



FRIAS
FREIBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
ALBERT-LUDWIGS-UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

From 2012 to 2014 the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) is the host of an interdisciplinary research group of initiating nature that brings together theology and medicine in a particular, medically relevant context. The group consists of Prof. Dr. theol. Klaus Baumann, Freiburg, Prof. Dr. med. Arndt Büssing, Witten/Herdecke and Prof. Dr. theol. Niels Christian Hvidt, Munich and Odense (Denmark).

The ambition is to contribute to the understanding of patients' psychosocial and spiritual needs and resources in health care in order that they may gain the best assistance as they cope with their disease. Through the particular focus on the needs of patients, the project variously has sought to support and value their strategies to cope and adjust to chronic disease and suffering. Furthermore, the project focuses also on health care professionals and patients' relatives, and their values and ways of coping with stress in their various attentions to the needs of patients.

In its interdisciplinary work, the research group dedicates itself to basic research. It combines the specific research topics of the respective researchers involved and aims to generate new common projects - in particular to the interdisciplinary interpretation and publication of such research. The future aim is to evaluate also specific inter-

ventions in the context of spiritual care and to give research-based recommendations for the implementation in the health care professions. Further, it works actively towards the enhancement of research networks in the secular, religiously pluralistic European context, beginning with Denmark, Germany and Switzerland so that through interdisciplinary dialogue and striving, the quality of research in this field, so relevant for patient quality of life and the health care system at large, might be advanced and stabilized.

As mentioned, another particular focus of the group is to learn more about the beliefs and values of health care workers. Most of the research in the field centers on the spirituality and beliefs of patients and relatives and how they impact their quality of life and their coping with their disease crisis. Comparatively, much less research has been conducted on what the care givers believe and on what values they rely for meaning.

But why even think of enquiring into such values? Isn't it a private matter? And is the most important not that patients are offered the best possible medical care from care givers, regardless of their ethnicity, political observation and spiritual and religious beliefs? This has long been the opinion of care givers, but with this approach it is often forgotten that modern health care has deep religious roots. As is well known, the European hospital system has roots in the mediaeval monasteries and the way they organized care for the sick based on a strong ethical and spiritual motivation.

What may be equally important is that a growing body of research literature on values and beliefs among health professionals is starting to show consistently that values and beliefs are not mere private spheres but that they have a deep impact on health care in at least three areas: 1. Ethical decision making, 2. Communication with patients and 3. The notion of one's own health practice. Such work has been driven in the US by Farr Curlin (University of Chicago) and colleagues.

In Europe now a few researchers are starting to look at similar matters. One of the

ideas of the FRIAS research group has been to bring these workers together in order to discuss how the research can continuously be improved and how, if possible, their results could be compared. This was why in February 2013, FRIAS hosted a seminar with researchers from the US (Farr Curlin and Ryan Lawrence), Germany (Klaus Baumann, Arndt Büssing, Eunmi Lee, Franz Reiser, Franziska Fraas, Hannah Ritter, Anne Zahn, Philipp Kerksiek and Karin Jors), Denmark (Niels Chr. Hvidt and Christian B.v. Randwijk), and Switzerland (René Hefti and Stefan Rademacher).

At this seminar, a two-fold research agenda was advanced: (1) To compare existing results from the different countries that have already collected comparable data, and (2) On the basis of the existing data to improve the research instruments for future data collection.

In 2014, FRIAS will host a further seminar with researchers who focus on patients' spiritual needs, particularly how they can be perceived and measured, and how they can be addressed and supported.

Primary publications 2013

The work of the members of the FRIAS research group has already led to some results that soon will be brought to the interested reader:

- Büssing A, Janko A, Baumann K, Hvidt NC, Kopf A: Spiritual needs among patients with chronic pain diseases and cancer living in a secular society. *Pain Medicine* 2013 (accepted)
- Büssing A, Baumann K, Hvidt NC: Spirituality and Health – Editorial. *Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2013 (in press)
- Büssing A, Hirdes AT, Baumann K, Hvidt NC, Heusser P: Aspects of spirituality in medical doctors and their relation to specific views of illness and dealing with their patients' individual situation. *Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2013 (in press)
- Büssing A, Günther A, Baumann K, Frick E, Jacobs A: Spiritual dryness as a measure of specific spiritual crisis in Catholic priests. Associations with symptoms of burnout and distress. *Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2013 (in press)
- Büssing A, Reiser F, Michalsen A, Zahn A, Baumann K: Do Patients with Chronic Pain Diseases Believe in Guardian Angels: Even in a Secular Society? A Cross-Sectional Study Among German Patients with Chronic Diseases. *Journal of Religion and Health* 2013; May 31. [Epub ahead of print]

Correspondence:
Prof. Dr. Theol Klaus Baumann
Prof. Dr. Med. Arndt Büssing
Prof. Dr. Niels Christian Hvidt
Research Fellows
Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies
Stadtstr. 5, D-79104 Freiburg i Bg

Announcements

Publications:

Spirituality in Patient Care

by Harold G. Koenig

3rd ed., Templeton Press, 2013

For further information see: <http://templetonpress.org/book/spirituality-patient-care>

Spirituality, Theology and Mental Health

by Christopher Cook, SCM Press, 2012

For further information see: www.scmpress.co.uk/books/9780334046264/Theology-Spirituality-and-Mental-Health

Heilung in den Religionen: Religiöse, spirituelle und leibliche Dimensionen

ed. by Veronica Futterknecht, Michaela Noseck-Licul & Manfred Kremser

Wien: Schriftenreihe d. Österreichischen Ges. für Religionswissenschaft (ÖGRW)

New APA Journal:

Spirituality in Clinical Practice

edited by the psychologists Lisa Miller (Columbia University) and Len Sperry (Florida Atlantic University/Medical College of Wisconsin). Its first quarterly issue is scheduled Jan. 2014.

Those wishing to submit an article contact: alexandra.jordan@gmail.com

Psyche & Geloof (Psyche & Faith)

a Dutch journal of religion and mental health (started in 2011) ed. by Dr. P.J. Verhagen, Secretary of the WPA Section on Religion, Spirituality and Health.

For more information contact: athegger@telfort.nl

Spirituality and Psychiatry Newsletter

The WPA Section on Religion, Spirituality and Psychiatry has begun publishing the newsletter "Psyche & Spirit".

For downloads see:

www.religionandpsychiatry.com/

Meetings & Conferences:

IAPR Congress 2013

International Association for the Psychology of Religion & the University of Lausanne August 27-30, Lausanne VD (Switzerland)

For further information see: www.psychology-of-religion.com/conferences/

TASK Meeting 2013

The 6th meeting of the Transdisziplinäre Arbeitsgruppe Spiritualität und Krankheit TASK

September 9/10, 2013, FRIAS, Freiburg i.Bg. (Germany)

For further information contact:

anna.blattner@friass.uni-freiburg.de

"Einführung in die Achtsamkeitsbasierte Kognitive Therapie zur Rückfallprophylaxe bei depressiven Erkrankungen"

November 7-9, Oberberg-Akademie, Berlin (Germany)

For further information see:

www.oberberg-akademie.de/programm.html

"Spiritual Care - Modewort, Trend oder echte Notwendigkeit"

Gem. Herbsttagung von AGEAS und VKAS

November 9-10, Quarten SG (Switzerland)

For further information see: www.ageas.ch

4th European Conference on Religion, Spirituality and Health ECRSH14

"Integrating Religion/Spirituality into Clinical Practice: Focus on Health Care Professionals"

May 22-24, 2014, Univ. of Malta (Malta)

For further information see: www.ecrsh.eu

&

Pre-conference Research Workshop

May 18-21, 2014

Contact: info@rish.ch

Impressum

This Newsletter is published by the Research Institute for Spirituality and Health, Langenthal

Editorial board: René Hefti, Stefan Rademacher

RISH - Research Institute for Spirituality and Health

Weissensteinstrasse 30

CH-4900 Langenthal / Switzerland

Phone +41 (0) 62 919 22 11

Fax +41 (0) 62 919 22 00

info@rish.ch / www.rish.ch