LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Spirituality and Life Satisfaction in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Healthcare Professionals

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To the editor

Spirituality in its general meaning is the quality or state of being spiritual or being attached to questions and values concerned with religion. It is also frequently used in a non-religious sense to designate a capacity to understand fundamental moral and existential questions regarding the nature of soul1. Religion and spirituality are becoming increasingly important in the care of seriously ill patients2. Life satisfaction is the way in which people show their emotions, feelings (moods) and how they feel about their directions and options for the future3. Here, we presented our observations about spirituality and life satisfaction in pediatric hematology/oncology healthcare professionals to draw attention to the spiritual aspects of health professionals.

Pediatric oncologists are faced with life-threatening conditions and psychosocial problems that can negatively affect their life satisfaction4. Ecklund et al5 reported that a large proportion of pediatric oncology clinic staff identify themselves as spiritual, although many do not have a traditional religious identity. This may have implications for the training of pediatric oncologists and the spiritual care of seriously ill children and their families5. On the other hand, many studies performed in different cultures of the world showed that there was a positive and significant correlation between spirituality and life satisfaction5,7. In our practice, we have observed that many pediatric hematology/oncology healthcare professionals have a high life satisfaction because they believe the following spiritual/religious teachings: If any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people8. The best of people are those that bring most benefit to the rest of mankind9. In addition to continuously gaining reward for the sick person and for those who look after him for Allah’s sake, illness is a most important means for the acceptance of supplications. Indeed, there is significant reward for believers looking after the sick10. The most precious of assets is life. And the most valuable among duties is service to life. And the most valuable service among life’s important means for the acceptance of supplications. Therefore, we think that healthcare professionals caring seriously ill patients should be trained for spiritual teachings.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, HC; Writing—original draft, HC; Writing—review & editing, HC.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests: The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding: The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethical Approval: This study was a review of published literature and no ethical approval was required.

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