



# THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL APPROACH IN HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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## Background:

Spirituality has been known as an important component of holistic patient care and also is a complex and subjective concept that can be applied in health promotion and disease prevention. Spirituality is the core of a human being and is usually conceptualized as a ‘higher’ experience or a transcendence of oneself. World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board recommendation to add a spiritual dimension to the definition of health, spirituality is now taken into consideration as a component of quality of life. Health promotion attempt which most often center on groups or populations, ‘holistic nursing care’ is primarily described at an individual level, such as ‘embracing the mind, body and spirits of the patient’ (McEvoy and Duffy 2008). In health promotion, holism is based on the recognition of ‘inextricable links between social and economic conditions, the physical an environment, individual lifestyles and health (WHO ). Recognition of the need to care for the whole person is increasing and according to the holistic vision of care, all healthcare workers, especially nurses, should pay attention to the spiritual dimension of care. Spirituality has been shown to have a potential impact on physical health, be a potential protection factor in preventing diseases progressing in a previously healthy population. The purpose of this study was to identify the extent to which spiritual approach in health promotion and disease prevention were measured in all quantitative and qualitative research articles published in Research in Nursing.

Table 1. Quantitative analysis of the articles included in the review

References	Year	English or Turkish affiliation	Study type	Nursing perspective	Main topic
1	2010	English	A cross-sectional design	Yes	Nursingstudents' view of spiritual health and health-promoting behaviours
2	2006	English	The qualitative design	Yes	spirituality has a significantinfluence on thehealth of individuals.
3	2007	English	Theoretical	Yes	Spirituality in Nursing
4	2008	English	prospective, descriptive, longitudinal design	Yes	Spiritual Well-Being, and Quality of Life
5	2002	English	Review	Yes	Spirituality and Health for Women
6	2002	English	Review	Yes	Spirituality and health
7	2006	English	Review	Yes	Spirituality and family nursing:
8	2009	English	Review	Yes	Health Promotion, Forgiveness
9	2003	English	Empirical	Yes	Spirituality,Mammography Utilization
10	2004	English	Review		Spiritual Wellness,Holistic Health
11	2009	English	A qualitative methods		Spirituality,Coping Strategy or Health Seeking
12	2005	English	A descriptive multi variate design	Yes	Spiritual,Adolescents,health-promoting

## Methods

In October 2014, the MED-LINE, SCIENCE DIRECT, and WEB of SCIENCE search engines were screened with the words “spiritual and health promotion, disease, prevention, nursing” to find studies conducted between 2001 and 2014. According to the criteria, 12 studies were examined and used in this study.

The entire contents of the papers were analysed by quantitative and manifest qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff 2004).The quantitative analysis aimed at providing factual data such as year of publication, whether the paper had a hospital setting or nursing perspective, the study type and main topic of the articles. For the qualitative analysis, each article was first read thoroughly to provide an overall impression before identifying and extracting words or sentences which expressed (i) definitions or descriptions of the terms ‘spiritual’ or ‘holistic’, and (ii) how the terms were related to nursing, health promotion.

## Results

The quantitative analysis revealed that12 articles in the sample were published followed by 2001. The terms ‘spiritual,’ or ‘health promotion, disease, prevention’ were included in the title and/or abstract of 12 articles. All of them were written by English authors. The sample included one theoretical, five reviews, and one empirical article, one a cross-sectional design and two a qualitative, two had a design. The papers focused on health-promotion aspects related to various topics and age groups; one from a workplace setting, four from a school setting and 16 from a hospital setting or nursing perspective. The latter focused on views and perspectives of health from different informants and fields of nursing such as mental health, community health, geriatrics, occupational and oral health, as well as ways to promote health and empower various categories of patients. The qualitative analysis identified no larger, but several minor differences in the way spiritual aspects were related to nursing and health promotion respectively. Most of them seemed to focus on groups or society at large. Health promotive and preventive nursing based on a holistic-existential approach, however, gave only a few hits. The literature search showed that health promotive nursing research seemed to focus on controlling disease and preventing health problems related to a group- or society level, it was evident that there is a need to address the individual level. This need prompted the investigation of how a holistic-existential approach could broaden the perspective of health promotive nursing.

## Conclusions

Health promotive nursing is planned nursing actions designed to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities in their efforts to deal or cope with health challenges that they presently encounter in daily life or that might appear in the future. Nursing activities are based on spirituality approach, where the human being is viewed as autonomous and capable of developing self-empowerment in order to cope with health challenges. The nurse is a human being with knowledge of how to assist individuals, families and communities as well as how to facilitate their development and use of empowerment to promote health. The aim of nursing is to support human beings in their need of knowledge and to offer practical assistance in order to cope with illness experiences and suffering and, thus, to stimulate healthy living. Spirituality is widely used in individuals for coping negative conditions and promoting health, but nursing are not aware of it. So it is very important to effectively manage improving health behavior and disease prevention. Nurses should consider the spiritual needs of improving the health of individual’s behavior.

## References

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