

WHAT'S UP DOC PETE?



Does Spiritual Health have a Scientific Basis?

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Emerging research on the connection between spirituality and health, collected by the National Library of Medicine database (PubMed), shows that articles on “spiritually” have increased 7-fold, from 62 articles between 1970 - 1990 to 1226 articles from 2000 - 2004.

For clarity, it is important to define the difference between religion and spirituality. The Oxford dictionary defines *Religion* as “a particular system of faith and worship”, and *Spiritually* as “of the human spirit or soul, not physical or worldly”.

Health care which treats the whole person, and not just the disease, incorporates the spirit as a part of a holistic, science-based, healing process. Our current scientific research models do not easily lend themselves to studying the effects of spirituality on health. In the 1990's and early 2000's a focus on spiritual practices like meditation, prayer, yoga and qi gong showed increased calming and settling of the body's hormonal system, as well as increases in blood levels and melatonin along with reduced inflammation with a lowering of cortisol levels. The use of a spiritual practice has shown improvements in immunological response in both active disease states (infection and cancer) , and in prevention of disease, with increased antibody response to vaccinations. These examples show that many spiritual practices have a positive and direct impact on the biochemistry of our body, brain and behavior.

Integrating spiritual practice into a health care approach that treats the patient and not *just* the disease poses a challenge for both the health care practitioner and the patient, as little is written about the best approach. However, research shows that consideration should be made to the role of spirituality in health by both clinical practitioner and patient to positively impact the outcome.

Join us as we explore this challenge each Saturday in Sept. on “**Quantum Health**” aired on KVEC, 920am, at 1:00.



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