

Differential Examination of Religious and Spiritual Self-Identification in Relation to Resilience and Mental Health Outcomes: Implications for ACT



Jason A. Nieuwsma, PhD,^{1,2} Melissa Smigelsky, PhD,¹ Jennifer Wortmann, PhD,¹
Paola Fernandez, BS,¹ & Keith G. Meador, MD, ThM, MPH^{1,3}

1. Mental Health and Chaplaincy, VHA
2. Duke University Medical Center
3. Vanderbilt University



MENTAL HEALTH AND CHAPLAINCY

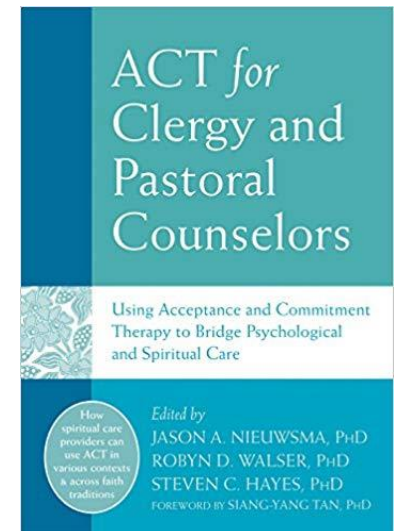
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Disclosures

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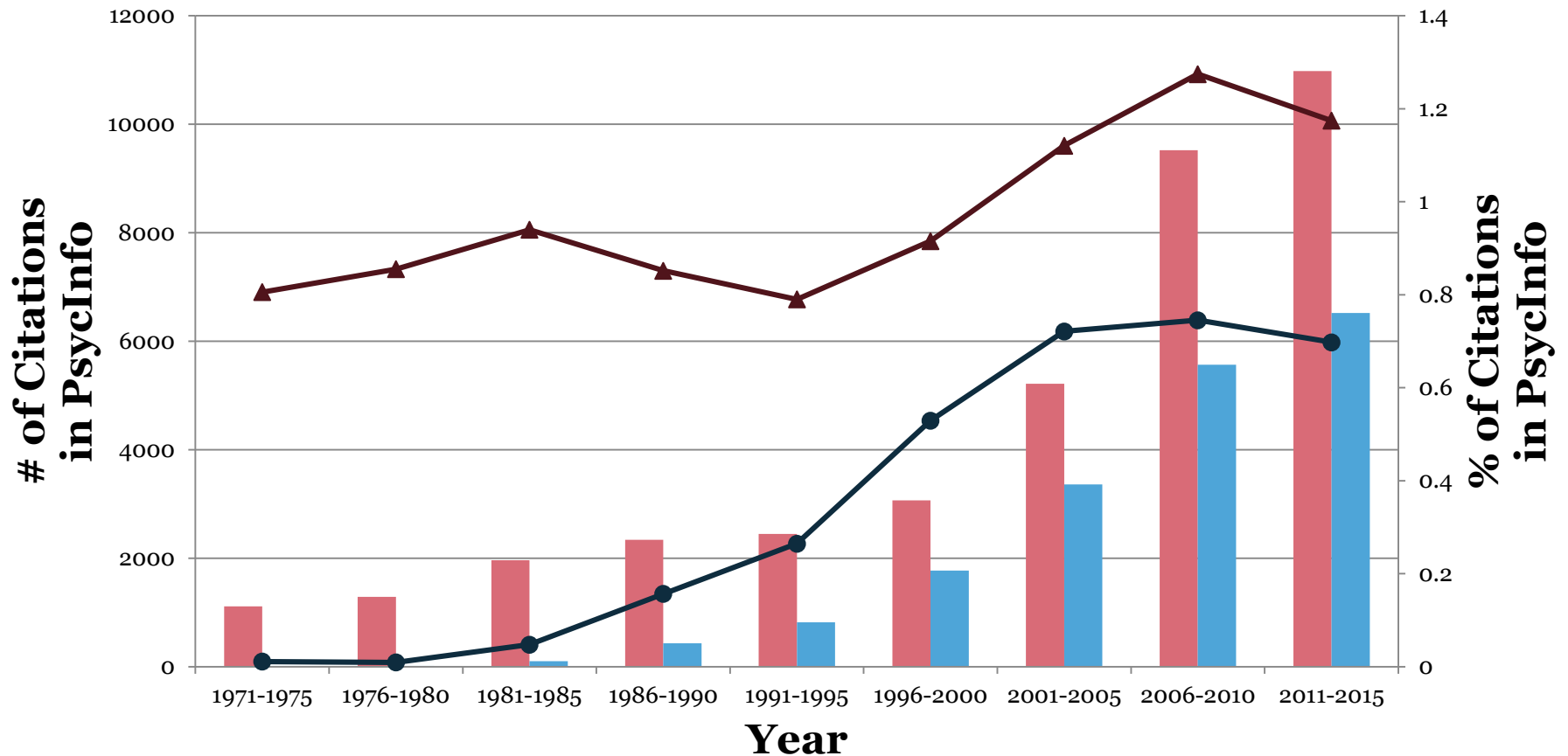
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Religion/Spirituality Research in Mental Health

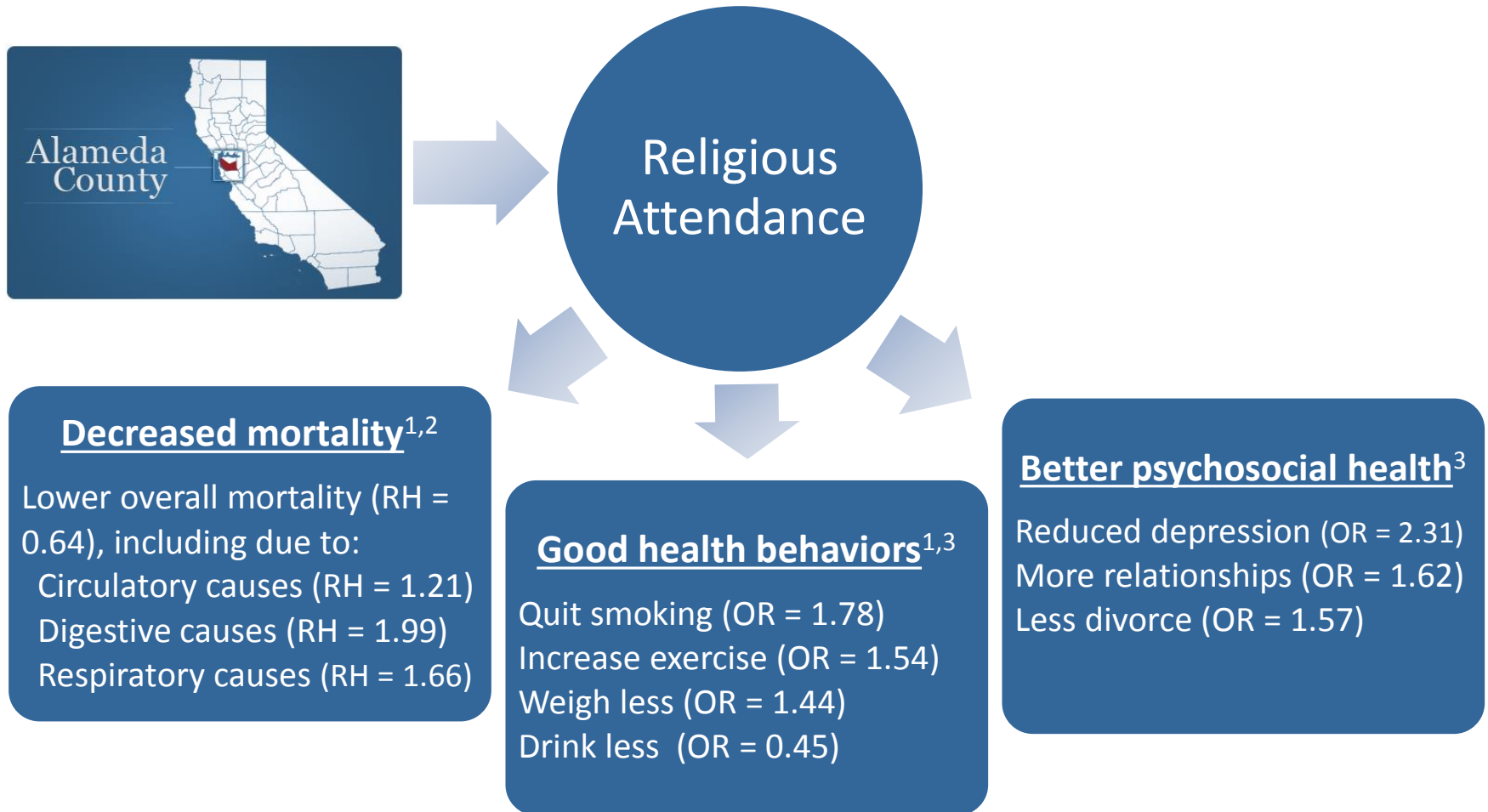
3

Religion# Spirituality#
Religion% Spirituality%



Religion and Health Over the Life Course

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1. Strawbridge, W.J., Cohen, R.D., Shema, S.J., & Kaplan, G.A. (1997). Frequent attendance at religious services and mortality over 28 years. *American Journal of Public Health, 87*, 957-961.

2. Oman, D., Kurata, J.H., Strawbridge, W.J., & Cohen, R.D. (2002). Religious attendance and cause of death over 31 years. *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine, 32*, 69-89.

3. Strawbridge, W.J., Shema, S.J., Cohen, R.D., & Kaplan, G.A. (2001). Religious attendance increases survival by improving and maintaining good health behaviors, mental health, and social relationships. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 23*, 68-74.

Religion, Spirituality, & Health: A Complex Relationship

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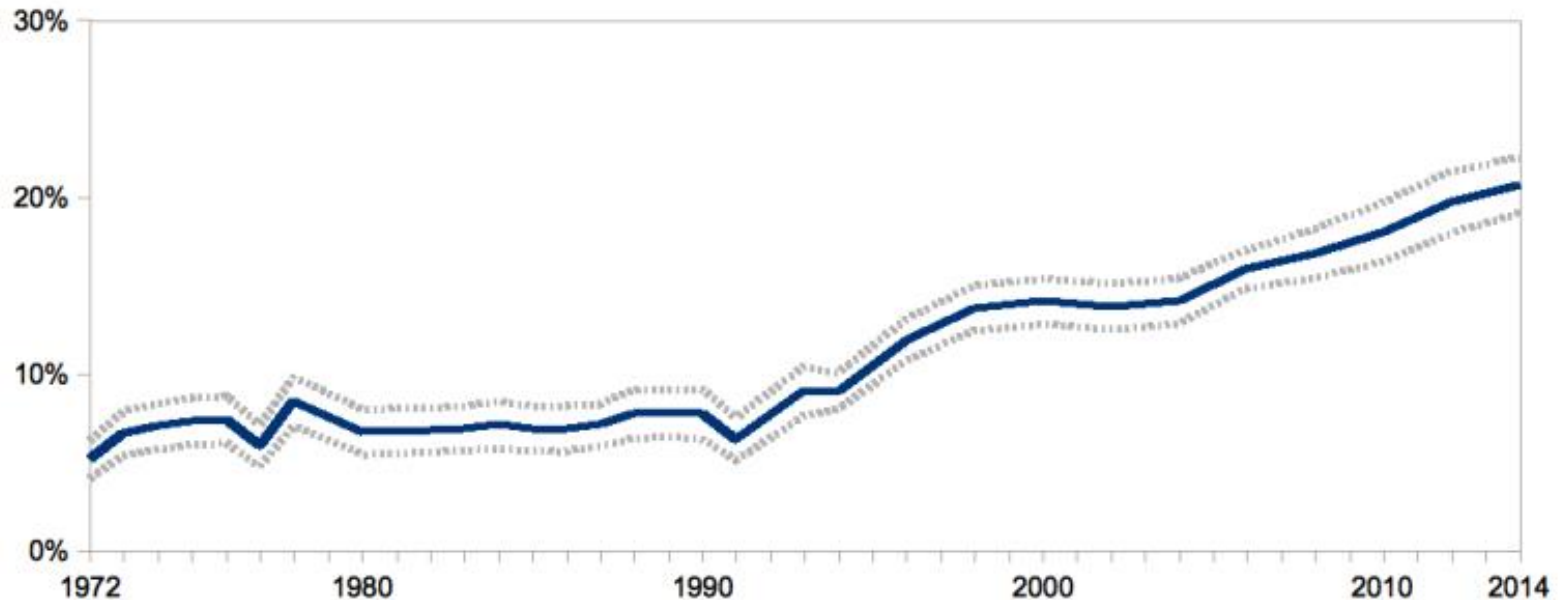
- **Mixed findings**
 - Positive correlations
 - Negative correlations
 - Null findings
- **Multiple variables**
 - Predictor (Religion/Spirituality)
 - Dependent (health outcomes)
- **Emerging sociodemographic trends**
 - Shifting religious landscapes
 - Rise of “the nones”



Rise of the “Nones”

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Percentage of Americans who say their religious preference is "none"



Solid blue line represents the percentage each year.

Dotted gray line is the upper/lower bounds of the 95 percent confidence interval (the average plus/minus the margin of error).

Source: General Social Survey

Rise of the “Nones”

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Generational Replacement Drives Growth of Unaffiliated

	Evangelical Protestants	Mainline Prot.	Historically black Prot.	Catholic	Other Christian groups	Other groups	Unaffil.
Silent generation (1928-1945)	30%	22	5	24	3	4	11
Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	28	17	7	23	3	5	17
Generation X (1965-1980)	25	13	7	21	4	6	23
Older Millennials (1981-1989)	22	10	6	16	3	8	34
Younger Millennials (1990-1996)	19	11	6	16	3	8	36

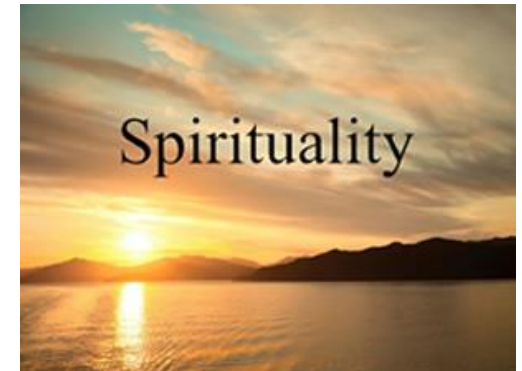
2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Don't know/refused answers not shown. "Other Christian groups" includes Mormons, Orthodox Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses and a number of smaller Christian groups.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Spirituality

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- Many “nones” believe in God (68%), report a deep connection with nature (58%), and report being spiritual (37%).¹
- “Spirituality” is an evolving construct.²
- Is “spirituality”...³
 - Religiosity?
 - Psychosocial well-being?
 - More?
- The inherent socially constructed nature of “spirituality” entails definitional challenges.⁴

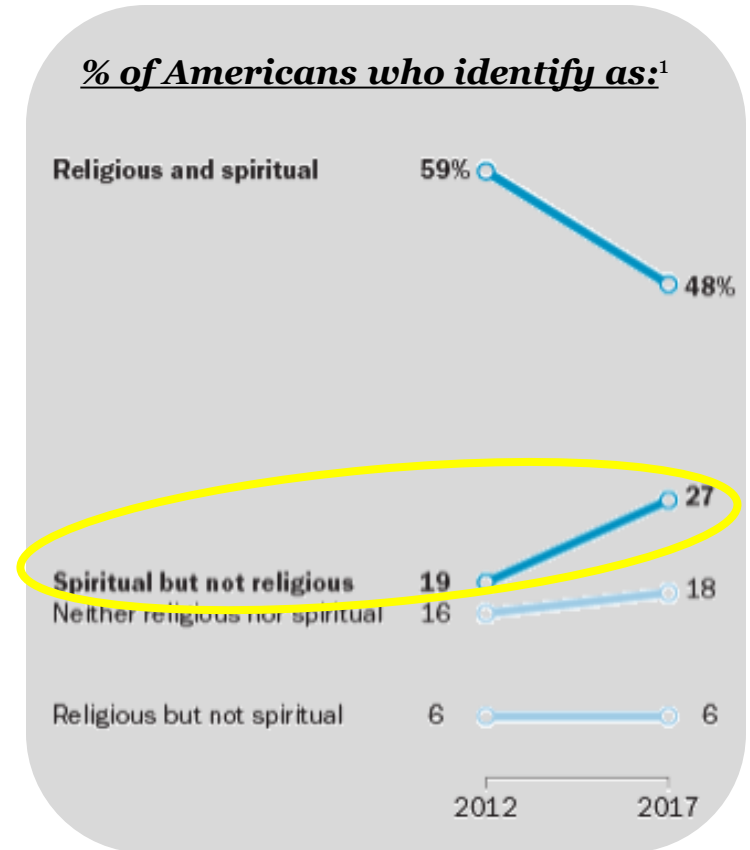


1. Pew Research Center: “Nones” on the rise: One-in-five adults have no religious affiliation. Washington, D.C., Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012
2. Bender, C. & McRoberts, O. (2012). Mapping a field: Why and how to study spirituality. *SSRC Working Papers*. Social Science Research Council. Brooklyn, NY.
3. Koenig, H. G. (2008). Concerns about measuring “spirituality” in research. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 196(5), 349–355.
4. Nieuwsma, J.A. (2016). Empirical foundations for integrating religious and spiritual practices with psychotherapy. In J.A. Nieuwsma, R.D. Walser, & S.C. Hayes (Eds.), *ACT for clergy and pastoral counselors: Using acceptance and commitment therapy to bridge psychological and spiritual care*. Oakland, CA: Context Press / New Harbinger Publications.

Spiritual But Not Religious (SBNR)

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- Self identification as:²
 - “Spiritual” (i.e., interior spiritual life)
 - Not “Religious” (i.e., exterior, organized, communal practices)
- Among the “nones,” 88% identify as at least moderately spiritual.³
- SBNR Categories:⁴
 - Dissenters
 - Casuals
 - Explorers
 - Seekers
 - Immigrants



1. Lipka, M. & Gecewicz, C. (2017). More Americans now say they're spiritual but not religious. Factank: News in the Numbers. Pew Research Center.
2. Saucier, G., & Skrzypińska, K. (2006). Spiritual but not religious? Evidence for two independent dispositions. *Journal of Personality*, 74(5), 1257–1292.
3. Chaves, M. (2017). *American religion: Contemporary trends* (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
4. Mercandante, Linda A. (2014), *Belief without borders: inside the minds of the spiritual but not religious*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Study Question

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Does self-identification as spiritual and/or religious relate to outcomes on measures of resilience, mental health, and moral injury?

Methods: Moral Injury in Veterans

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- **Participants & Procedure:**

- $N = 315$ post-9/11 veterans
- Recruited from VISN 6 MIRECC Repository¹
- Completed 40-page questionnaire by mail



- **Measures:**

- Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)²
- Moral Injury Questionnaire – Military Version (MIQ-M)³
- Davidson Trauma Scale (DTS)⁴
- Beck Depression Inventory-2 (BDI-2)⁵
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)⁶
- Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religion and Spirituality (BMMRS)⁷

1. Brancu M, Wagner HR, Morey RA, et al.: The Post-Deployment Mental Health (PDMH) study and repository: A multi-site study of US Afghanistan and Iraq era veterans. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* e1570, 2017.
2. Connor, K.M. & Davidson, J.R. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). *Depression and Anxiety*, 18, 76-82.
3. Currier JM, Holland JM, Drescher K, et al.: Initial Psychometric Evaluation of the Moral Injury Questionnaire-Military Version: Moral Injury Questionnaire. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy* 22: 54–63, 2015.
4. Davidson, J. R. T., Book, S. W., Colket, J. T., Tupler, L. A., Roth, S., David, D., Hertzberg, M., Mellman, T., Beckham, J. C., Smith, R., Davison, R. M., Katz, R., & Feldman, M. (1997). *Assessment of a new self-rating scale for post-traumatic stress disorder*. *Psychological Medicine*, 27, 153-160.
5. Beck, A. T., Steer, R. A., & Brown, G. K. (1996). *Beck depression inventory – Second edition manual*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.
6. Saunders, J. B., Aasland, O. G., Babor, T. F., De la Fuente, J. R., & Grant, M. (1993). Development of the alcohol use disorders identification test (AUDIT): WHO collaborative project on early detection of persons with harmful alcohol consumption-II. *Addiction*, 88(6), 791-804.
7. Fetzer Institute, National Institute on Aging: *Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research: A Report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group*. Kalamazoo, MI, Fetzer Institute & National Institute on Aging, 1999.

Participants: Demographics

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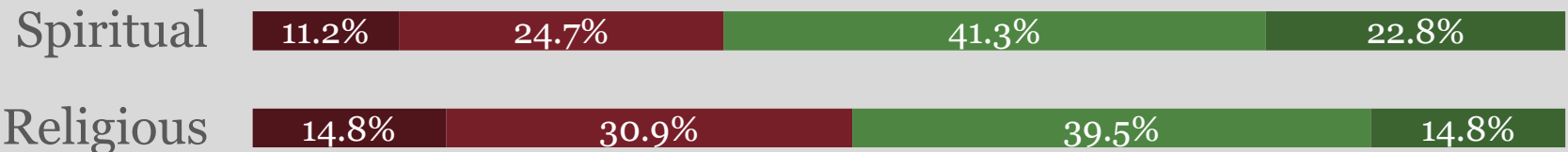
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	M	SD	N	%
Age	46.36	10.36		
Sex				
Female			42	13.4
Male			272	86.6
Race				
Black			133	42.5
White			175	55.6
Other			14	4.5
Married			217	69.1
Years of education	13.87	3.78		
Number of tours	1.68	1.09		
Religious affiliation				
Baptist			108	34.6
Catholic			45	14.4
Non-denominational Christian			40	12.8
Other Christian traditions			58	18.6
Multiple / Other / Don't know			39	12.5
None			22	7.1

Participants: Spirituality & Religiosity

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N = 315 Post-9/11 Veterans

■ Not ■ Slightly ■ Moderately ■ Very



Religious

Yes

No

Spiritual

Yes

Spiritual And Religious
N = 160 (51.4%)

Spiritual But Not Religious
N = 39 (12.5%)

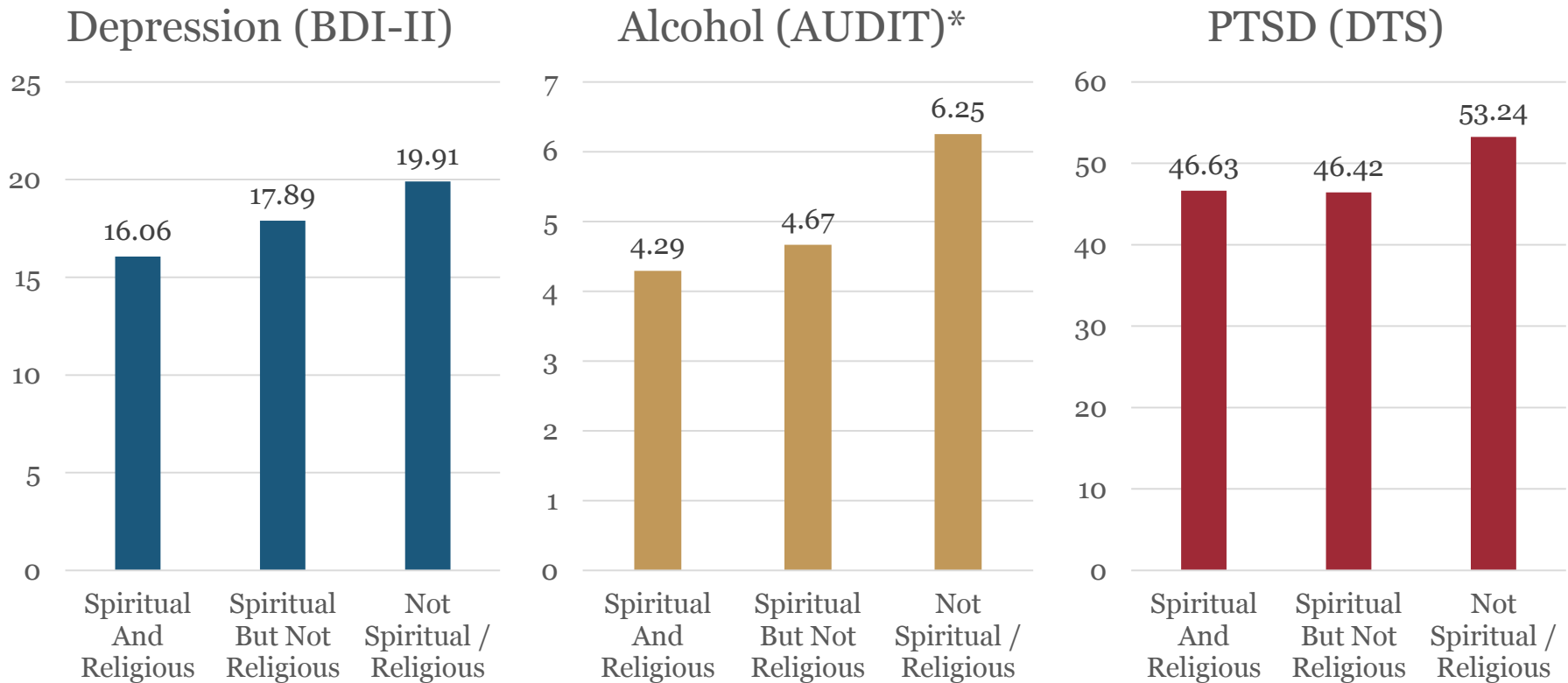
No

Religious But Not Spiritual
N = 9 (2.9%)

Not Spiritual Nor Religious
N = 103 (33.1%)

Findings: Mental Health

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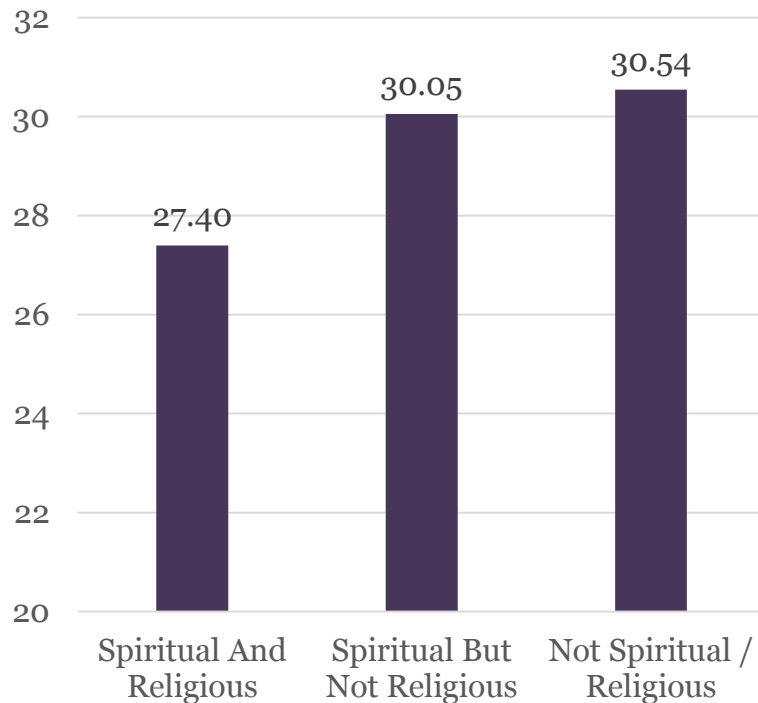


* *One-way ANOVA significant at $p < .05$. Follow-up post-hoc analyses indicate that compared to those who identified as neither spiritual nor religious, those who identified as both had lower alcohol abuse scores ($p < .01$) [and depression scores ($p = .057$)].*

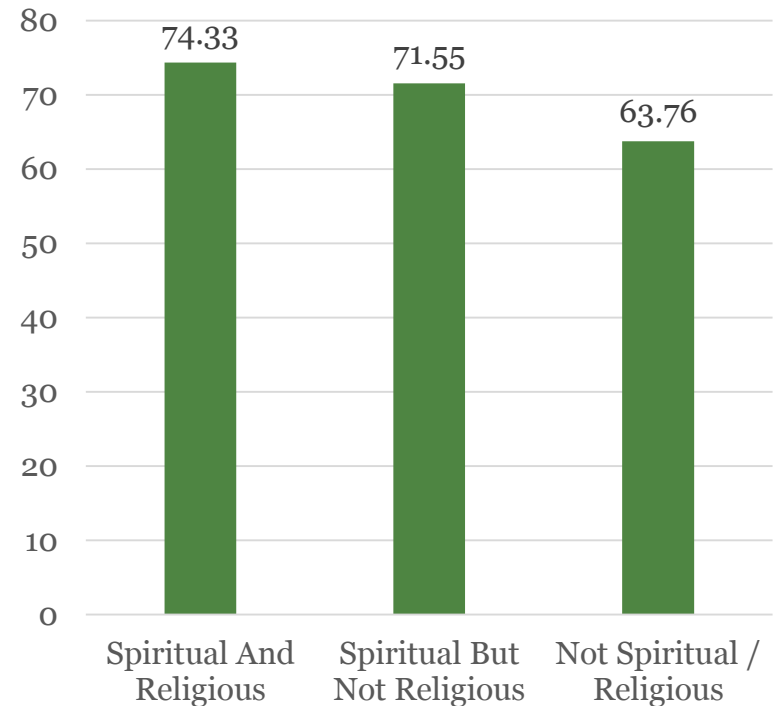
Findings: Moral Injury & Resilience

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Moral Injury (MIQ-M)*



Resilience (CD-RISC)*



* *One-way ANOVA significant at $p < .05$. Follow-up post-hoc analyses indicate that compared to those who identified as neither spiritual nor religious, those who identified as both had lower moral injury scores ($p < .05$) and higher resilience scores ($p < .001$).*

Discussion

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- Prior research has identified resilience as measured by the CD-RISC as a proxy for psychological flexibility.¹
 - Higher religiosity potentially linked to **more** psychological flexibility?
 - If not religious, might spirituality be alternative way to foster psychological flexibility?
- ACT offers distinct possibilities for fostering psychological flexibility among religiously unaffiliated, including the “spiritual but not religious.”²
 - Spirituality is not a “universal language.” It means different things for different people (as does religion).³
 - Perhaps particular possibilities for application among those who have experienced an existential wounding, such as moral injury.

1. Elliot, T.R., Hsiao, Y.Y., Kimbrel, N.A., Meyer, E., DeBeer, B.B., Gulliver, S.B., Kwok, O.M., & Morissette, S.B. (2016). Resilience and traumatic brain injury among Iraq/Afghanistan war veterans: Differential patterns of adjustment and quality of life. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 73*, 1160-1178.

2. Hayes, S.C., Nieuwsma, J.A., & Walser, R.D. (2016). ACT and the religiously unaffiliated. In J.A. Nieuwsma, R.D. Walser, & S.C. Hayes (Eds.), *ACT for clergy and pastoral counselors: Using acceptance and commitment therapy to bridge psychological and spiritual care*. Oakland, CA: Context Press / New Harbinger Publications.

3. Hall, D.E., Koenig, H.G., & Meador, K.G. (2004). Conceptualizing “religions:” How language shapes and constrains knowledge in the study of religion and health. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, 47*, 386-401.

Contact Information



JASON NIEUWSMA

JASON.NIEUWSMA@VA.GOV

JASON.NIEUWSMA@DUKE.EDU