

Prayer and healing

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



Prayer and Healing of the of the Introduction Providing health care involves not only caring for physical health needs, but also caring for the psychological and emotional needs of the patients. This is because psychological and emotional condition of a person affects his health to a great extent. However, researches in the field of health care sector have found that the aspect that plays more important role in healing and positive health outcome of the patient is his spiritual beliefs. This project discusses the case in which a patient's spiritual needs were fulfilled to enhance the positive health outcome and recovery. During the interactions with the patient, it was found that the patient followed the Christian religion. Hence, the practice of prayer, which is ardently followed by Christians, was used as a method to cope with health challenges and overcome the fears. The Patient Background I was assigned as a health care provider to a 40 year old male patient He was hospitalized due to a severe heart attack that he suffered while working in his office. He was a manager in a software firm. He was hospitalized for more than a week now and was recovering from the heart attack. He was advised by the doctors to take rest for few days as it was evident that the workload and the deadline pressure at work have led to the heart attack. His wife told the doctors that he is a workaholic and never takes his mind off the work. The doctor assigned me with the job to make him realize that relaxing and 'time off' from work is important if he intends to live a healthy life in the future. However, it was not easy as the patient was quite distressed and disturbed with heart attack as he had never thought that something like this can happen to him. It was evident that the heart attack had left him shaken and depressed. In such a situation, I

realized that what can give him strength was spirituality and religion. The Power of Prayer During my interactions with the patient, I came to know that he used to pray during his childhood. This practice was inculcated in him by his mother. However, with his admission in college, he got very busy with studies and in few days, stopped praying. When he discussed about the practice of prayers, there was warmth in his tone and he seemed to go back to the days when he felt secure and protected. He reflected that somehow, prayers made him feel safe and guarded. I was very happy to hear this as I knew that there was a strong foundation of faith and spirituality in his personality. I needed to bring his strength to the surface and reintroduce him to the spiritual practice of prayer. I knew that this will help him to not only cope with the sudden threat to his health and in recovering, but will also bring the attitude of relaxation and play in his life. Research studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between health and religious practices. The practical way in which people express their spirituality, by following the rituals and beliefs associated with certain organization, is known as religion (Young & Koopsen, 2011, p. 90). The act of praying is considered as a spiritual practice by 91% of people (Young & Koopsen, 2011, p. 67). According to Taylor (2002), prayers support and promote the spiritual health as it helps people to connect with their spirituality (Young & Koopsen, 2011, p. 68). A questionnaire based research conducted on hospitalized patients by American Pain Society found that the most commonly used nondrug method of controlling pain was the ‘ personal prayer’ (Puchalski, 2001, para. 12). The study also revealed that 76% of patients used personal prayers to manage pain (Puchalski, 2001, para. 12). These findings prove

that prayer can be a powerful means to cope with the pain, uncertainty and hopelessness that health problem can bring in patient's life. In case of my patient, it was necessary to use prayer as a method to cope with the unexpected health problem, and in recovering from it. At the same time, I wanted to make prayer as a means to bring tranquility and attitude of contentment in patient's life. Researches studies by Christy (1998), Ellison and Levin (1998) and Easterbrook (1999) have revealed that " spirituality has a positive effect on health" (Ervin-Cox, Hoffman & Grimes, 2005, p. 287). Patients have revealed that during the health crisis, and when they faced with life threatening disease, they experienced peace and hope through religion and prayers (Ervin-Cox, Hoffman & Grimes, 2005, p. 287). In 1999, Herbert Benson, a Harvard University cardiologist, stated that compared to individuals not professing to any spirituality, persons with a spiritual or religious beliefs were more likely to be healed (Ervin-Cox, Hoffman & Grimes, 2005, p. 288). His experience and researches have revealed that the health outcomes of persons who pray are favorably influenced by their prayers (Ervin-Cox, Hoffman & Grimes, 2005, p. 288). These findings show that there is tremendous power in prayers. After getting the permission from the patient to add prayers to his recovery program, I decided to write prayers that expressed the idea of thankfulness, fulfillment and peace in his life. This was necessary as it was the patient's hectic lifestyle and workaholic nature that had increased his stress and led to the heart attack. With the help of patient's family members and patient, I wrote the prayers which focused on gratitude and contentment with life. For example, the first prayer that I wrote expressed gratitude to God for saving his life and giving him a chance

to enjoy whatever he had achieved till now. The second prayer expressed gratitude for giving him a wake-up call at the young age of forty, when he can still enjoy the life to the fullest, and prove to be a positive influence on his children by spending quality time with them. The third prayer that I wrote was to express the gratitude for making him physically and emotionally capable of enjoying all the gifts that life has to offer. Later, I also introduced meditation with prayer. The later prayers were aimed at thankfulness and commitment to focus more on peace and happiness than on professional achievement. In this way, the patient learnt to spend at least 10 minutes or more in silence, gratitude and peace. Conclusion Introducing the practice of prayer in patient's life not only helped him to bring back the feeling of trust and security in his life, but also helped him to get in touch with his deeper 'self.' In this way, the practice of prayer changed his attitude and helped him to cope with the health problem positively and to shift his focus in life.

References Ervin-Cox, B., Hoffman, L. & Grimes, C. M. (2005). Selected literature on spirituality and health/mental health. In R. H. Cox, B. Ervin-Cox & L. Hoffman (Eds.), *Spirituality and psychological health*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado School of Professional Psychology Press. Puchalski, C. M. (2001). The role of spirituality in health care. *BUMC Proceedings*, 14(4). Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1305900/> Young, C. & Koopsen, C. (2011). *Spirituality, Health and Healing: An Integrative Approach*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett Publishers.