

Can Christianity help you in times of illness?

Part II



WHAT WE DID

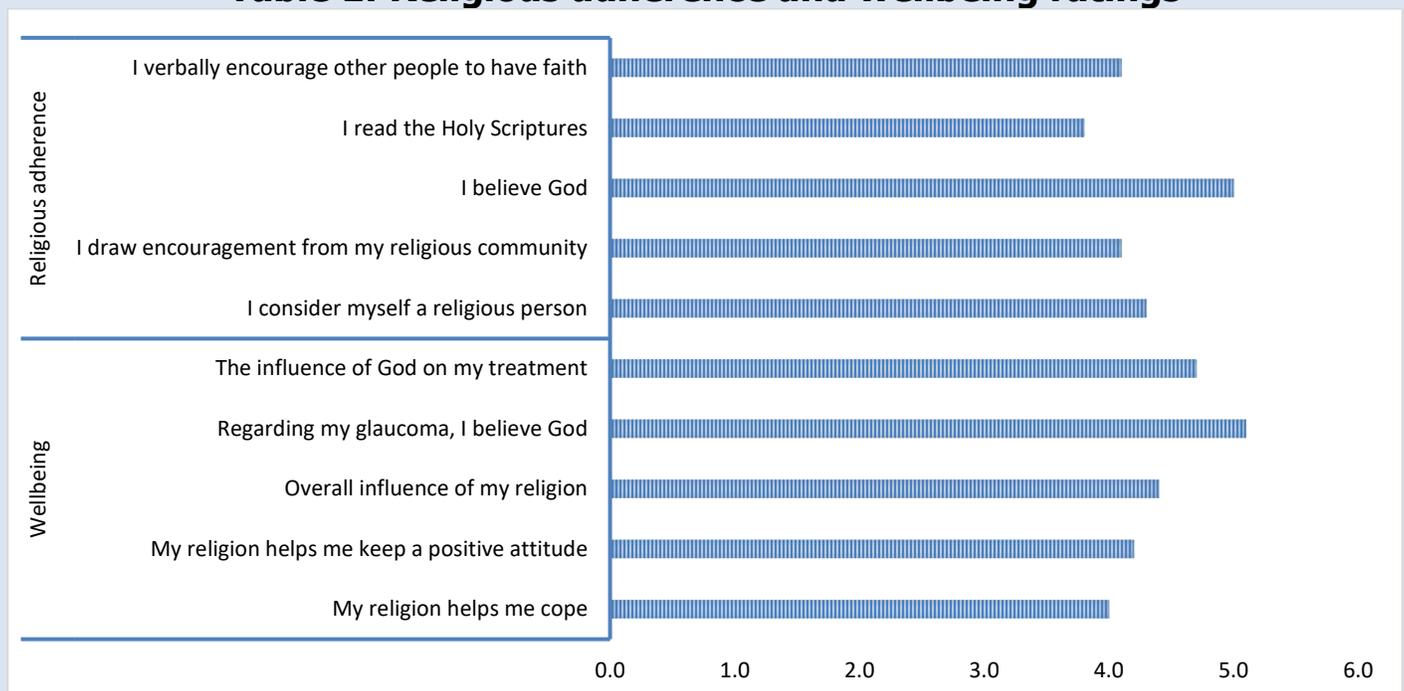
In the prior month’s infographic we shared how practicing Christianity helps diabetic patients; now we present results from a different group of patients. We evaluated the impact of religious adherence on wellbeing in self-identified Christian glaucoma patients.¹

Glaucoma patients were surveyed on:

- Wellbeing (ability to cope, attitude toward glaucoma, motivation to take medication, and God’s concern)
- Religious adherence (commitment to specific basic activities, knowledge of faith and self-rated spirituality; Acts 2:42, 47; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:4-5).



Table 1: Religious adherence and wellbeing ratings



Score based on 7-point scale (0 being no agreement and 6 being high agreement)

WHAT WE FOUND

248 Christian patients were included:

- Patients committed to Religious Adherence activities (i.e., drawing encouragement from other church members, reading Scripture or encouraging others to have faith), and with a basic knowledge about faith, demonstrated greater wellbeing regarding their glaucoma treatment ($p < 0.0001$).
- Patients committed to at least 1 of the 4 Religious Adherence activities had greater wellbeing scores ($p < 0.0001$, Table 2).

Religious activity is correlated with the ability to cope!

Table 2: Wellbeing scores based on commitment to Religious Adherence activities

| Religious Adherence | Committed | Patients | Wellbeing | |
|--|-----------|----------|---------------------------|---|
| | | | My religion helps me cope | My religion helps me keep a positive attitude |
| I draw encouragement from my religious community | Yes | 120 | 5.3 | 5.2 |
| | No | 124 | 2.1 | 2.9 |
| I read the Holy Scriptures | Yes | 96 | 5.3 | 5.4 |
| | No | 141 | 3.2 | 3.3 |
| I verbally encourage others to have faith | Yes | 115 | 4.8 | 5.1 |
| | No | 120 | 3.0 | 3.2 |

Score based on 7-point scale (0 being no agreement and 6 being high agreement)

- Wellbeing scores were higher with increased commitment on any 2, 3, or all 4 of the Religious Adherence activities ($p < 0.001$, Table 3).

The more frequently a religious activity is performed the greater the ability to cope!

Table 3: Wellbeing scores based on commitment to any 2, 3 or 4 Religious Adherence activities

| Religious Adherence* | Committed | Patients | Wellbeing | |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------------|---|
| | | | My religion helps me cope | My religion helps me keep a positive attitude |
| Any 2 | Yes | 40 | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| | No | 101 | 2.8 | 3.0 |
| Any 3 | Yes | 50 | 5.1 | 5.2 |
| | No | 141 | 3.1 | 3.3 |
| All 4 | Yes | 57 | 5.2 | 5.4 |
| | No | 191 | 3.6 | 3.8 |

Score based on 7-point scale (0 being no agreement and 6 being high agreement)

* Religious Adherence activities - I draw encouragement from my religious community; I believe God; I read the Holy Scriptures; and I verbally encourage other people to have faith

WHAT IT MEANS

The more a person seeks God based on biblical principles, the greater their ability to cope with illness.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

Increasing your religious knowledge and practicing your biblical faith can help cope with chronic illness!!



1. Stewart WC, Sharpe ED, Kristoffersen CJ, Nelson LA, Stewart JA. Association of strength of religious adherence to attitudes regarding glaucoma or ocular hypertension. *Ophthalmic Res* 2011;45:53-6.