

## Current Aspects and Thoughts on the Connections between Medicine and Religion

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### Abstract

Lately, a joint effort between medical science and religion has been developed and discussed, outlining their compatibility, together with several medical or health aspects. Thus, religion, together with science (in our case medicine) includes the human being as the source of wholeness and stability in an uncertain earthly world. In this way, especially for the past 20 years, we can see an increased connection between religious behaviors and health sciences. We present here our thoughts and ideas on the possible connections that might exist between medicine and religion.

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Firstly, we can define religion, based on a word that comes from Latin "re-ligio" (all the teachings and practices that build the relationship with God), and which awakens human consciousness towards Divinity, while the medicine can be considered as a branch of science which has the role of maintaining and restoring physical and mental health, even self-care of everyone, we might say [1].

There is now a constant joint effort between medical science and religion, and these two very important aspects are been developed and extensively discussed later, showing their compatibility.

Thus, there are opinions that several miracles are done by doctors' hands, being assumed that the doctor needs both hands (physical and spiritual) to work on healing the individual. We cannot bear fruit unless we combine the work of both hands. Thus, psychiatry for example has become increasingly open to recognize the importance of religion in human life, the spirituality positively influencing in treating mental issues and not only. The doctor, as an instrument in God's plan, helps his peer to enjoy the caress of the sun and the rain so as not to let the suffering body and soul. Thus, sometimes people who built a solid faith stand out as having a better overall health status.

Also, the relationship between Divinity and medicine, between that Supreme Power and physician (e.g. when a man has the opportunity to treat a fellow) is prepared to combine mainly three states of humanity: Body, spirit and soul. In this respect, the man is working on the harmony between Creator and creature.

We must remember that every people have its own indigenous and native wisdom (and we want to make a separation from the outset that religion and medicine are two "distinctive characteristics". These concepts were opposite for a while, but both in religion and in medicine, we highlight two paths leading to the same goal, the man's happiness. Both religion and medicine helps us gain healthy values along our life.

Since the Middle Ages, both in the East and the West, the man goes through a journey of continuous search of accomplishment, to bestow respect and receive understanding, a way that corresponds with the demands of universal reason, which only God can accomplish, to strengthen through prayer in the earthly life.

Aristotle defined science as a sum of principles and knowledge obtained through demonstration [2]. The Christians believe in

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the harmony between religion and science (medicine), unless in medicine there is nothing that would be contrary to the principles of religion (as long as there are no actions against life).

Falot acknowledged that spirituality involves looking for the ultimate meaning, purpose and values, and the relationship with a transcendent being or supreme power, or a sense of connection with the divine or sacred. Thus maybe medicine without religion is like an unfinished clay pot, both and each one having the same goal: deep knowledge of reality and truth. In conclusion, faith is the engine of religion and medicine without faith becomes catalectic [3].

Today, religion, together with science (in our case medicine), includes the human being as the source of wholeness and stability in an uncertain earthly world. For the past 20 years we can see a strong connection between religious behaviors and health sciences. Faith (the way of communication with the supreme power) and medicine (a partial way of achieving the truth) developed agreeable relationships being highlighted as two different streets that are powered from the same light. Thus, religion can make the first step in meeting the one who He created towards achieving and fulfilling the ultimate goal, i.e., the ultimate charity.

The British Christian Rene de Duve, the Nobel Prize winner for Medicine stated that the universe is not that inert cosmos from the physicists or scientists' theories. The universe is life, and this entire infrastructure around us is supported by a divine force [4].

Also, medicine is not a simple practice, it is a vocation, a lofty ideal, and it means achieving the truth to discover the goodness of God set in every man.

Moreover, there is vision that God does not deny religion through medicine, but He reinforces and solidifies it; if we look around, everything is based on a Creator. Man, being created in the image and likeness of God, received a glimpse of Him, to work together to treat the individual's physical or mental condition.

The doctor bandages the wound, and God heals it. Working through medicine is a noble duty towards Divinity. Besides prayer, medicine is one way to strengthen our faith. Life shows that people with a religious practice, and a healthy lifestyle, show a lower risk of developing diseases. Human health, we can say, is the result of a religious practice. By this statement, God is revealed, being discovered through medicine as well.

The nature, honesty, pure soul is more than health given by the medicine. We have to mention that there are situations in which medicine is limited; God can do the rest. Faith neither opposes nor denies human reason, but it blends it. And nature is a bridge that connects man and God. We can say that the reason is the vector of faith in searching and discovering Divinity.

The man's intent (i.e., the doctor) is to provide an overview that opens a new goal, a new horizon, to look to the future with serenity and happiness, a fulfillment that only God can offer to the man without disappointing anyone.

Facing the reality, the intake of medicine is embedded in the sufferer's attitude having spiritual beliefs that leads to a better state of health, the man putting his trust in God. A study who was taking out patients suffering from various diseases shows people with spiritual beliefs as having a better evolution of the disease, compared with people who have avoid faith [5,6]. Consciously or not, man builds either a house or an invisible hole, the spiritual aspect wonderfully influencing a man's nature.

We also have to mention that without moral limits, without listening to the voice of conscience, the man falls apart and people today are responsible for the next generation. We all know that, God always forgives, while man occasionally forgives, but nature never forgives. There will surely be problems during our life, but not to forget that being human means to fight and being holy means to heroically fight acquiring the beauty of virtue and the joy of the innocent soul.

Community prayer is another important extent that reinforces the connection between health and religion. This connection is done from a scientific standpoint, by rousing the dorso-lateral and orbito-frontal area of the prefrontal cortex as a response to man's freedom of choice. Looking from this angle, an active person in religious terms is stronger to face troubles in life through neurobiological mechanisms, affiliation and common prayer [7].

The most used contact mentioned in statistical data along time was that between religiosity and mental health. Since ancient times man has acted and will act tirelessly in pursuit of happiness according to Hackney and Sanders [5]. After several studies, the Donahue group found a connection between religiosity and fear that discourages man. Spirituality stands out as a strong point of treatment for mental disorders [8].

In this context, we can also speak of a moral community effectiveness offered by religion today. Moreover, Seybold and Hill stated that a healthy lifestyle with religious values incorporates human being and reinforces the positive emotions acquired by religious people [6].

## Conclusion

We can say that religion and medicine are presented as two roads that lead to the same goal, i.e., fulfilling life. As such suffering, illness, inner state is paramount in relation to the human body and determines its fate, nature and physical condition. Recently, man has established a solid connection between religion and medicine, so the Church can strengthen its identity again, opening a bridge along its mission.

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