

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION TITLE: The Moderating and Mediating Effects of Religious Coping on Quality of Life in Long-Term Survivors of Cancer

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Religious coping is used to describe how individuals use their religion and religious beliefs to help them cope with difficult situations. Researchers have investigated the role of religious coping in those with cancer; however, little research has been completed with long-term survivors of cancer. Additionally, little research has been completed regarding religious coping and long-term survivorship using advanced statistical analyses. This investigation sought to clarify the role of religious coping in long-term survivors of cancer and their quality of life. Using structural equation modeling, religious coping was tested as both a mediator and a moderator of quality of life.

The study used a sample of 213 participants who were long-term survivors of cancer. The participants completed mail surveys assessing demographic variables, quality of life, and religious coping. Despite poor model fit, religious coping was a mediator in the relationship between demographic variables and quality of life. In the mediation model, both age and sex predicted religious coping. In the moderation model, the only significant path was between religious coping and quality of life.

Results of the study indicate that religious coping acts as a mediator in the relationship between demographic variables and quality of life. Religious coping influences quality of life

and may be beneficial to explore when working with long-term survivors of cancer. These findings enhance the clinical perspective of religious coping and have important ramifications on psychotherapeutic interventions for working with survivors of cancer. Psychologists who work with survivors of cancer should consider and respect the role religious coping has on the survivor.

Future research must continue to explore the pathways through which religious coping operates. More work must be done with long-term survivors of cancer and with ethnically diverse populations. Researchers must continue to use advanced statistics to study these complex relationships instead of relying on simple count and frequency data that only measure if religious coping is present. As the world of psycho-oncology continues to grow, so must the understanding of the variables involved in healthy and happy survivorship.