

# Perceptions of Islamic aspects of health and religious inclination of treating physicians

## **BACKGROUND:**

There is a wealth of information on the Islamic aspects of health and healing both from the *Qur'an* and the *Ahadith* of the Prophet (SAW). However it is not documented how a sample of patients admitted in a hospital perceive the impact of faith on healing and even more important, the impact of religious inclination of the treating physician, on their illness and its treatment. The purpose of this pilot survey was to evaluate and document these attitudes.

## **METHODS:**

This survey was carried out in Jan 2007 at two leading high volume public hospital in Islamabad. A formatted 12 questions form was filled for each patient. For each question, there were three answer choices: "yes, no or don't know." One question had an additional option of, "some times."

A total of 604 patients completed the survey. The patients were admitted in the inpatient internal medicine department, including those in the intensive care unit if they were capable of answering the questions. All subjects were Muslims. 91.2% were male and 8.8% were female. 8.9% were < 20 years of age, 56.5% were between 21-40 and 34.6% were > 40 years of age.

## **RESULTS:**

Almost all the patients believed that healing comes from Allah (SWT) and 99.7% believed that leading an Islamic way of life (abstaining from forbidden things e.g. alcohol, cigarettes, illicit drugs etc.) leads to a healthier life. 95% of the patients believed that praying five daily *salat* will keep them healthy. Not surprisingly, all of the patients believed that there was still hope from Allah (SWT), even when doctors have given up hope. Surprisingly, 93% wanted to see their physicians pray for their health in front of them. Even more surprisingly, 88% believed that having a physician, who is also a God-fearing person, will have a positive impact on their health. Table-1 gives the details of the survey.

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### CONCLUSIONS:

Even though religious ignorance is quite prevalent in our society, this survey clearly shows that the overwhelming majority of patients still equated an “Islamic way of life” with good health. The most important finding of this survey was that for most patients, religious inclination of the physician was perceived as a very important factor in the overall effectiveness of treatment.

**Table-1**

QUESTION	REPONSE (no)	FREQUENCY % (total 604)
<b>1. Do you believe that when we fall sick, it is Allah How Heals us?</b>		
Yes	603	99.8
No	0	
Don't Know	1	0.2
<b>2. Do you agree that by leading an Islamic way of life, you can be healthier?</b>		
Yes	602	99.7
No	2	0.3
Don't Know	0	
<b>3. Do you agree that those who are regular in daily salat (namaz), their health is better than those who do not?</b>		
Yes	576	95.4
No	15	2.5
Don't know	13	2.2
<b>4. Do you believe that Allah can cure even when doctors have given up hope?</b>		
Yes	604	100
<b>5. When sick, do you specifically pray to Allah to heal you?</b>		
Yes	553	91.6

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No	1	0.2
Some times	50	8.3
<b>6. Should we request others to pray for us, when we are sick?</b>		
Yes	597	98.8
No	2	0.3
Don't Know	5	0.8
<b>7. Should doctors pray for their patients in front of them?</b>		
Yes	564	93.4
No	18	3.0
Don't know	22	3.6
<b>8. Do you think that if your doctor is a good, God-fearing Muslim, it will have a positive impact on your illness?</b>		
Yes	532	88.1
No	48	7.9
Don't know	24	4.0
<b>9. Do you believe that listening to the Holy Quran will help in your healing?</b>		
Yes	594	98.3
No	3	0.5
Don't know	7	1.2
<b>10. Do you believe that giving sadaqa (charity) will help in you healing?</b>		
Yes	501	82.9
No	102	16.9
Don't know	1	0.2
<b>11. Do you believe that wearing of written aya's of the Holy Quran helps in healing?</b>		
Yes	463	76.7
No	76	12.6
Don't Know	65	10.8

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