

The Accuracy of Measures for Screening Adults for Spiritual Suffering in Health Care Settings: A Systematic Review

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Abstract : Objective: Guidelines for palliative and spiritual care emphasize the importance of screening patients for spiritual suffering. The aim of this review was to synthesize the research evidence on the accuracy of measures used to screen adults for spiritual suffering. Methods: A systematic review has been conducted. We searched five scientific databases to identify relevant articles. Two independent reviewers screened extracted data and assessed study methodological quality. Results: We identified five articles that yielded information on 24 spiritual screening measures. Among all identified measures, the 2-item Meaning/Joy & Self-Described Struggle has the highest sensitivity (82-87%), and the revised Rush protocol has the highest specificity (81-90%). The methodological quality of all included studies was low. Significance of Results: While most of the identified spiritual screening measures are brief (comprise 1 to 12 number of items), few have sufficient accuracy to effectively screen patients for spiritual suffering. We advise clinicians to use their critical appraisal skills and clinical judgment when selecting and using any of the identified measures to screen for spiritual suffering.

Keywords : screening, suffering, spirituality, diagnostic test accuracy, systematic review

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