ABSTRACT

Aim: Having information about how religious orientation is in medical sciences students, is necessary to improve it. Thereby, based on the limited studies in this regard, the present study was designed with the aim of studying the religious orientation and its effective factors among medical sciences students. Methods: This study is a descriptive-analytic study conducted in Iran in 2015-2016. The sample of the study was students who were studying at Qazvin University of Medical Sciences. The sample required for the present study was estimated to be 566 by using the sample size formula. The sampling was Quota Sampling. The Persian version of Religious Orientation Scale was used to examine the religious orientation of the students. The scale consists of 45 items divided into two subscales. Results: Among 566 students participating in this study, 356 (61.2%) were girls and the rest were boys. The mean age of the participants was 23.3 years. Regarding religion, nearly 98 percent of the samples were Shia. In total, 14.5%, 67.5% and 17.4% of the participants showed poor, moderate, good and excellent religious orientation, respectively. The present study showed that students of medical sciences have a good level of religious orientation. According to the importance of the religious attitudes to reduce mental disorders and promoting the academic achievement of students, it is recommended that students be examined at the time of entering universities regarding their spirituality and their attitudes toward spirituality.

Keywords: Religious orientation, Spirituality, Medical student, developing country.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings have been in need of religion from the distant past [1,2]. Many experts believe that religion plays an important role in an individual’s physical and mental health [3]. In one hand, religions suggest individuals to positive values such as hope, optimism, friendship, empathy, trust in a higher power, patience in hardship, respect to others’ rights, pardon and forgiveness and on the other hand, they prohibit them from negative values such as rape, corruption, aggression, and denial of the others’ rights, which in both situations, the observance of them leads to positive effects on an individual’s behavior and it makes life meaningful [1,4]. Religion is associated with the sense of meaning and having purpose, growth, and perfection, as well as the power and dominance of an individual and brings the real meaning to life and distance the individuals from the absurdity, which ultimately results in higher traits such as self-actualization [5]. Over the past two centuries, talking about the psychology of religion and its effects on making humans and societies healthier have been developed, and the attention of many experts, as well as psychologists in this field, has attracted.

Religious orientation is one of the religious indicators that is considered as an indicator of adherence and tendency toward religious teachings [6]. Religious orientation refers to the performance of an individual based on religious teachings, which are pointed out as an indicator of adherence and tendency toward religious teachings. Right religious orientation can have beneficial psychological effects on individuals [7]. A variety of classifications for religious orientation are presented. In one classification, Alport and Ross divide religious orientation into two groups of intrinsic and extrinsic. In intrinsic religious orientation, religion is considered as a transcendent inner value, and in extrinsic religious orientation, the purpose is to achieve a better position, place and gaining benefits through pretending to be religious [8]. In fact, the intrinsic religious orientation is to satisfy a real inner need, and extrinsic religious orientation is to satisfy outer desires and demands [6]. Many students in medical science universities face many challenges and stressors. Several factors such as academic environment, hospital environment, facing patients in emergency situations, facing suffering patients and facing dying patients can all cause excessive stress and anxiety in these people. Recent studies have shown that religion and its related subjects, such as religious orientation, can relieve the levels of stress and anxiety and, consequently, appease individuals’ mental and emotional status [9-13]. The results of Musarezaie et al. in this regard, showed that religious orientation plays a major role in relieving stress and anxiety of students [3]. Recent studies showed that religion and spirituality among students are a significant factor in their academic achievement as well [14]. Having information about how religious orientation is in medical sciences students is necessary to improve it. Thereby, based on the limited studies in this regard, the present study was designed with the aim of studying the religious orientation and its effective factors among medical sciences students.

METHODS

Study Population

This study is a descriptive-analytic study conducted in Iran in 2015-2016. The sample of the study was students who were studying at Qazvin University of Medical Sciences. The University has five faculties which are School of Medical, Paramedical Faculty, School of Public Health, School of Nursing and Midwifery and the School of dentistry. At the time of the study, a total of 2,600 students were studying in various fields at the university. The sample required for the present study was estimated to be 566 by using the sample size formula. The sampling was Quota Sampling. In this method, at first, the ratio of students in each college was calculated to the total number of university students. And based on the ratio, the number of samples from each faculty was quantified. The researcher then attended the faculty and received the list of the student and randomly selected the sample from the list. In Total, a number 190 people from the School of Medical, 145 people from the Faculty of Paramedical Faculty, 125 people from the School of Public Health, 75 people from the School of Nursing and Midwifery and 31 people from the School of dentistry were enrolled in the present study.

Data Collection

Data collection was done by two researchers. Data were collected in the university environment at a time when students were not disturbed in their academic affairs. Potential participants were approached and informed about the study and its objectives. The questionnaires then were distributed and participants were asked to complete and return the forms within one hour. After completing the questionnaires by participants, the researcher examined the
The present study showed that in general, who were studying at Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, have a good religious orientation, although this was different among students of different faculties.

Although the religious attitudes among medical sciences students are so important, little research has been conducted in this regard so far. However, the results of the studies among Iranian population show somewhat similar results to the results of the present study. In a study conducted in this regard in 2017, Jafarimanesh et al. studied the religious orientation of Iran University of Medical Sciences students. The sample of the Jafarimanesh et al. study was made up of 288 students who were studying in Iran University of Medical Sciences. Allport questionnaire was used to study the religious orientation. The mean score of intrinsic and extrinsic spiritual wellbeing in the study of Jafarimanesh et al. was 28.5 and 26.5, respectively, which indicates relatively a good religious orientation [5]. In another study conducted in 2015, Sadeghi et al. studied the religious orientation of 320 students of medical university of Gonabad. Allport questionnaire was used to study the religious orientation. Similar to the results of the present study, the results of Sadeghi et al. study showed that students of medical university of Gonabad have relatively a good religious orientation [5].

The results of international studies are slightly different from the results of the present study. In a Pakistan study conducted in 2015, Buzdar et al. studied the religious orientation of a group of Pakistan students. To study the religious orientation, Buzdar et al. used a questionnaire in which intrinsic religious orientation, personal extrinsic orientation, and extrinsic social orientation were examined. The results of the Buzdar et al. study showed that students have a high intrinsic religious orientation and a very high personal extrinsic orientation [17]. In another study conducted in 2015, Bhat et al. studied the religious orientation of 100 Hindi students. The results showed that more than 99 percent of students had an excellent religious orientation which it is slightly higher than the results of the present study [18]. The difference in the results of internal and international studies can be due to different religions. Cultural differences may be relevant in this regard as well.

CONCLUSION

Religion is one of the factors that have a high ability to create a unit personality in individuals. The present study showed that students of medical sciences have a good level of religious orientation. According to the importance of the religious attitudes in order to reducing mental disorders and promoting academic achievement of students, it is recommended that students be examined at the time of entering universities in terms of their spirituality and their attitudes toward spirituality. It is also important to promote their religious attitudes and spiritual wellbeing, as well as institutionalize spirituality in academic settings. Due to the limited research on religious orientation among students of medical universities, further studies are going to be needed to determine any benefits. It is recommended that studies be conducted among students with different religions as well.
Study limitations

Most of the participants in the present study were Muslim and Shia, which should be considered when using the results of this study.

REFERENCES