

“Spirituality in Public Health: Moving Beyond Population Access to Understanding Communal Context and Its Influence over Health”

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Given the preponderance of evidence suggesting a largely positive relationship between people’s health and their spiritual/religious beliefs and practices, how should we adjust public health approaches to account for this influence? In particular, how should we consider the influence of beliefs and practices as part of the communal context in which life is lived? Where does spirituality fit within the agent-host-environment model? What does group membership mean to individual health in the context of faith communities? This paper will explore conceptual arguments in the context of public health paradigms. Implications for intervention design and implementation will be highlighted.