

**Exploring the World Views,
Spirituality and Health Beliefs
of Healthcare Professionals
and Community Health
Workers in Moshi, Tanzania**

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Introduction

- As investigators have examined ways to prevent disease, promote positive treatment outcomes, and improve physical and emotional healing, researchers have given increasing attention to the intersection between spirituality and health. However, researchers face challenges in defining, quantifying, and interpreting measures of broad concepts such as faith and spirituality. Also, there is currently a lack of cross-cultural research in this area especially among populations where spiritual beliefs may play a significant role in people's world views and health behaviors.

Purpose

- **To understand how people, especially health care workers, in Moshi, Tanzania understand the world, religion/spirituality, health, and the interactions between these concepts.**

Opportunity for Research Partnership

Hart Leadership Program

- Community-Based Research Service Learning
- Faculty Advisor
- Ethics Approval
- Partnership → KIWAKKUKI
- Deliverables

Partnership with KIWAKKUKI

- KIWAKKUKKI-DUKE Partnership
- Why: So as to assist the aforementioned parties with providing a more comprehensive approach to health prevention and intervention services that integrate concepts of spirituality, religion, and traditional beliefs.

Research Methods

PARTICIPANTS: Twenty-Three Interviews Total.

– BREAKDOWN:

- **16 KIWAKKUKI employees/volunteers**
- **3 KCMC Chaplains**
- **3 Islamic Leaders in Majengo Area**
- **1 Pastor**

Methods Continued

- **Semi Structured Interview: Averaged around one hour.**
- **Consent Process: Participants were read a consent script introducing our project and explaining its purpose. We then gained oral consent to participate, to voice record, to quote excerpts for academic audiences. A translator was used for Kiswahili speakers.**

Methods Continued

- **Format of interview:**
 - **Demographic characteristics**
 - **2 short stories, one relating to the cause(s) of HIV and to the cause(s) of good rains and harvest. They were followed by corresponding questions.**
 - **Personal and community health seeking behaviors**
 - **Support networks/coping mechanisms**
 - **Behavior change due to types of illness**

Interview Results

- **Themes or Recurring Information:**
 - **Suffering/Disease: God's punishment, Not God's punishment, Human actions**
 - **Science and Faith Interconnection: Physical and spiritual healing, prayer and work**
 - **Support/ Coping Mechanisms: Counseling**
 - **God's power to heal**
 - **Health seeking behaviors: modern medicine, religious medicine, traditional medicine, witchdoctor, combinations**

Suffering/Disease

- **God's punishment**: When asked about HIV/AIDS and suffering causation, some participants attributed it to God's punishment for sinful behavior.
- *"This is mainly God's judgment or due to God's anger so he punishes people." MUSLIM LEADER*
- **** "I think that the source of this problem...a lot of sins especially those like adultery and fornication have been done in the open. For instance, God has brought this as a punishment to his people because committing adultery and fornication has been done for recreational purposes instead of reproductive..."MUSLIM LEADER**
- *"Even also I have heard a lot of people talking. Sort of a punishment brought by God. Instead of annihilating us using fire and water like he did before... this disease had been put somewhere it is very tempting and this is through sexual intercourse. And many people like to engage in such activities." KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE*

Suffering/Disease Continued

- **Not God's punishment:** When asked about disease and suffering causation, some participants did not claim that God was responsible. Many view God as a loving father who would not cause pain or suffering in the world
- **** *“God is having a power to make people safe not to suffer. On my side, I have seen that people are making people to suffer, but not God. God wants people to become safe, to enjoy his world, to love his world, to work so that they can earn their daily bread, but not to suffer.”* KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE**
- **** *“God is so loving and God is not just like a bad father who can just slap his son or daughter who have done something wrong. God is so good. Now the association that it is a punishment from God is fear, the unfounded fear which has just come up because of not finding the solution to the problem but it is not God's punishment.”* KCMC CHAPLAIN**
- ***“So now the association of HIV with a punishment of God, it is only a kind of projection... this person is trying to defend oneself or these people are trying to shoot the problem to God which actually it's not his fault. It's their own fault.”* KCMC CHAPLAIN**

Suffering/Disease

Human Actions

- **Human Actions**: When participants were asked about what could have caused a young boy, Muhammed, to contract HIV many gave non-religious responses. Most related to scientific, social, and economic determinants of HIV contraction and death.
- ** *“Yes that is the big issue or root cause and they say that having sex without protection is a root cause. Because this getting contracting HIV/AIDS or getting AIDS, dying; this is the consequences of having **unprotected sex**.”* KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE
- *“People usually get upset when they have not received any sort of **education concerning HIV and AIDS**. For instance, if Muhammed had know more about his girlfriends he would have never had sex with her and he would have never contracted AIDS. And what really upset Muhammed’s mother is that she didn’t have enough education, enough awareness about HIV/AIDS.”* KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE

Science and Faith Interconnection: Physical and Spiritual Healing

- **This central theme focuses on how science and faith both play important roles in the participant's lives. Specifically, many look to medicine but also to the power of prayer and their faith in God to help heal.**
- ***** “If a person is ill, he needs the treatment physically but on top of that... the spirit it needs also to get healed... You know these two parts they need a balance. If I am ill that means I have an organ which has been injured. The spirit...is not only stationed in a particular area of the body. It is in the person. So to some extent, it is affected. And if it is affected, it can bring this person to a state of disappointment in life and so he needs the encouragement, he needs the care, he needs the love.” KCMC CHAPLAIN***
- ***“I know that many people pray, they relax. They relax and they are consoled by the prayers. And they are not in depression they reduce the emotions. And they can raise up the CD4. It is when they say they are cured by the prayers... that is not true that the prayers can take out the virus.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***

Physical and Spiritual Healing Continued

- This theme has an additional element that emphasized the importance of spirituality in assisting the success of modern medicine in physical healing
- *“They both belong to God...and also things like herbs and let’s say herbs and injections they are also belong to God. When I use the medicine and at the same time praying then because all things belong to God then naturally it’s the same thing and then promptly I get better. And according to the Islam religion when I take the medicine I say the word “” which means I am taking it in God’s name.” MUSLIM LEADER*
- *“This person should first pray to God ask God to help and then use the appropriate medicine. He is not saying that only pray but should also at the same time use medicine. According to the Islam religion there is a saying that every disease or every disorder has its own medicine. So he should do both...he should first pray and then take the appropriate medicine. “ MUSLIM LEADER*
- **** “People have to take medicine at the same time stick to their beliefs. They have to pray so that God can help the medicine to work in the body but not only waiting... taking medicine is one of the responsibilities and praying is another responsibility. So being they should work together.”
KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE**

Science and Faith Interconnection: Work and Prayer

- The theme of science and faith interplay was not restricted to health beliefs. Participants cited the importance of humanly contribution and religious influence in their daily successes.
- **** *“I pray. I work hard. If I combine these two things, then I can achieve my goal.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***
- **** *“Okay you know my question is if you are walking and suddenly there is an angry lion coming in front of you will you stay there and pray for the lord instead of running?” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***
- ***“That I have been telling you that you have to work instead of sitting and praying. You work and God will bless the work and it will make changes.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***

Support and Coping Mechanisms Counseling

There are many different approaches one can take in counseling those who are sick, physically and/or mentally. Among the people we spoke to, one of the most important forms of counseling for both them and others seemed to be religiously rooted. This then instilled motivation, courage and hope within them and the community. Counseling also serves as an opportunity to educate individuals about disease and suffering causation.

- *****“...such people [people living with HIV who believe they have been punished by God] do not need just one session of counseling, you need to go step by step trying to begin with the nature of the problem, the causes, and how he needs, he or herself needs to strike the balance, the spiritual state that will enable her to have inner peace.” KCMC CHAPLAIN***
- ***** Some people believe they can go to their church, tell their priest, and their priest can pray for them. They relax, they feel that they are helped, they feel better. Yeah. And of course priest are there to consult with, to revive hope.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***

God's Power to Heal

In our interviews, participants often spoke about certain churches in the area in which some clergymen, members and other leaders hold the belief that solely God's power is enough to heal. Some interviewees also held this belief themselves.

- ***** “One of the problems that she had was the religious people discouraged her from using the medicine she was using. And even they forbid her to use ARVS. She was told that if she uses the ARVS , she doesn't believe in the healing power of Jesus Christ.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***
- *“According to what I believe, for us who are born again, we believe that if we pray for you when you are sick, you get better because God clearly states that when we pray for you, in his name, you will be cured because we have seen that blind people they are being prayed for and then they see, here in Moshi, people who are crippled are walking.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE*
- ***** “...And I have sort of a small testimony concerning an HIV/AIDS patient. They have come to our church with such problems. And even in the church there are some people having HIV/AIDS. And through the prayers that I had put on one person, he was totally cured of HIV/AIDS...”***
How long did it take for prayers to cure the woman and child with HIV?
“5 minutes” Pastor

Health Seeking Behaviors: Modern Medicine

Every interviewee said that he or she would go to the hospital if he or she was ill. Some people also used traditional and/or religious medicine.

- *“When we are sick we go to the hospital to consult for investigation and to be given drugs.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE*
- *“Jesus Christ when he met someone who was blind and the blind asked for the sight and Jesus...do you know what Jesus did? Jesus...used his saliva mixed with soil and made mud and then put on the eyes and then say that go to the river and wash your face, you will have a vision...after that guy went to the river and did what Jesus said. He see. You see, according to my view this example shows that we have to go to the medical professional doctors asking for support and this doctors will describe treatment.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE*

Health Seeking Behavior continued

Religious Medicine

A prevalent belief was that religious medicine, or that which cures the spirit or the soul, is an important remedy in soothing mental and physical illness. This could take on many forms, including but not limited to, going to a religious leader or organization, praying and living according to God's will.

- ***“...a person who is spiritually ill needs the spiritual treatment. And the spiritual treatment is the word of God, the sacraments and also the prayer...” KCMC CHAPLAIN***
- ***** “God has his part in all forms of curing whether emotional or health wise. God has his part and if you have emotional problems yes you should ask God to help you. And also in the case if you have health issues you should also God but you shouldn't only pray. You should go to the hospital...you should go to traditional healers if you go to but at the same time you should also ask God to help you with problems whether emotional or health wise.” MUSLIM LEADER***

Health Seeking Behavior: Traditional Medicine

Participants held the belief that people living in more rural areas where hospitals are inaccessible are likely to go to a traditional healer. Most participants we talked to also use a variety of herbal remedies to treat minor illnesses that were taught to them by their parents/grandparents. Interviewees, also cited traditional medicine was successful in curing minor ailments. “Traditional healer” usually referred to those who suggest herbal or plant remedies in treating sickness which was clearly differentiated from “witchdoctors” or those who rely on supernatural forces.

- ***** “...maybe if I’m sick with a stomach ache according to our grandmothers and grandfathers they had some roots. They used to take it and the stomach stopped hurting. So it depends on the disease which you are suffering from. For the case of HIV forget about that...” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***
- ***** “It depends on the place because you know sometimes when some people go to the traditional healers it means there is no other alternative.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***
- ***“It depends. In rural areas, mostly you are advised to go to traditional healers. In town areas, there is probably no such thing as going to the traditional healers. You are most likely advised to go to the hospital and probably also to go to the religious leaders in order to get some spiritual counseling or spiritual healing.” KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE***

Health Seeking Behaviors: Witchdoctors

- ***“...So maybe the people who go to witchdoctors are less educated or they are living in more rural communities...The people who are on the lowest level of education. And people who are a little bit shaken with their religious beliefs, they are not very strong. Those who believe that everything that happens happens by the power of the spirit. “***
KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE
- ***** “I personally go to the hospital. Some people go to...those witchdoctors give them previsions. They may say for instance ‘you’re having such problems because you have not given food to your father or grandfather who have passed away.’ They might advise them to take a like say a goat and one of those local brew...they will slaughter the goat and take the local brew and spill it on top of the person’s grave. They take pieces of meat and put it on the grave also...they believe that they have asked their spirits and that he will get better.”***
KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE
- ***“In accordance to the beliefs of certain tribes once they have a problem. For instance, a person who is envious or jealous of you may cast an evil spirit upon you.”***
KIWAKKUKI EMPLOYEE

Conclusions

- **There is a strong belief among the majority of the participants that spiritual and physical healing are equally essential in combating disease.**
- **Causation of suffering and disease is multifaceted in that many people attribute these to scientific or secular reasons, religiously rooted reasons, or a combination of the two.**
- **Because of a multitude of factors like the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and the limited time physicians have to spend with patients...religious or motivational counseling can provide a patient with individual empowerment and allow him or her to better understand his mental and physical health issue(s).**
- **Faith in religion was the most important belief among participants and influences their daily actions and life perspectives.**
- **Because of people's strong devotion to their religions, churches and religious organizations play a crucial role in forming people's views on disease and health seeking behaviors.**
- **Traditional healers and witchdoctors seem to have more of a presence in treatment in isolated areas where modern health facilities are limited.**

Recommendations to KIWAKKUKI

- **Include option for spiritual counseling in VCT efforts**
- **Hold a monthly meeting with religious leaders to exchange ideas about policy and educational programs for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS**
- **Referral system of religious counseling and support services in each of the districts/villages KIWAKKUKI works in.**
- **Have forums within different districts KIWAKKUKI works in during which people share their religious, spiritual and traditional beliefs with KIWAKKUKI employees**
- **Ask churches if KIWAKKUKI can teach HIV/AIDS education to its members; specifically targeting youth.**
- **Cite bible passages to show the importance of prayer and medicine to treat sickness when dealing with people who discourage the use of medicine based on religious reasons.**
- **Bible or Koran Studies: Utilize passages from religious text as a way to talk about a series of sensitive physical and mental health issues including HIV/AIDS, support, medicine, stigma, rape, etc.**
- **Further research the influence that religion and spirituality has amongst those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS**

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