

European Network of Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Health

Newsletter January 2007

Volume 2 • No. 1

Editorial

Dear colleagues, dear friends

We are celebrating the first anniversary of our Newsletter. For us it is a small milestone of our vision and task to develop a European Network of Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Health. Relationships are growing and deepening. Conferences on Religion, Spirituality and Mental Health are flourishing (see Announcements). Several European research groups establish ongoing research in the field.

In this newsletter, Dr. Sebastian Murken will be introducing his Psychology of Religion Research Group, located in Bad Kreuznach (Germany, University of Trier), which has become one of the leading research centers for the Psychology of Religion in Europe. One of their research topics is Religion in Relation to Distress and Disease. Two current projects are investigating the influence of religious coping on colon

cancer and chronic pain, including aspects of positive and negative religious coping.

Furthermore Dr. Constantin Klein from the University of Leipzig presents an overview article on "Religiosity in Clinical Practice". Due to its length the article will be delivered to you as a supplement to this newsletter. Many thanks to Dr. Klein for his efforts.

We are happy to present to you the first edition of our RSH-Publications (Religion, Spirituality, and Health). It includes the contributions from Harold Koenig, Aarjan Braam, Philippe Huguelet and Martin Grabe given at the conference 2005 in Langenthal.

Because of the numerous other conferences in September/October 2006, the European Conference on Religion, Spirituality, and Health with Prof. Harold Koenig as well as the 3-4 day "Research Workshop" will be postponed to May 2008.

At last, I would like to thank all the past and present authors for their contributions to our newsletter.

René Hefti, M.D.

proposals for the dealing with religiosity in psychotherapy.

Forum

Psychology of Religion Research Group

When the Psychology of Religion Research Group (Arbeitsgruppe Religionspsychologie) was initiated at the University of Trier in 1988 by Dr. Sebastian Murken, it was quite uncertain how long the group would survive, since no funding was available. However, almost 10 years later, with six researchers at present, it has become one of the leading research centers for Psychology of Religion in Europe, attracting interns from many Universities. With major funding from the German State Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Volkswagen Foundation and the German Cancer Foundation, three main areas of research evolved in the past years:

1. Psychological aspects of membership in new religious movements

In the context of the Enquete-commission "So-called Sects and Psycho groups" of the German government (1996-1998) it became obvious how little empirical research on new religious movements (NRM) was available in Germany. This led to the design of a major longitudinal research project on "Self-chosen membership in NRM: causes and consequences." Quantitative and qualitative research is conducted with the consent of Jehovah's Witnesses, the New Apostolic Church, and a local Pentecostal church. The research includes questions on well-being and mental health.

2. Religion and health, religion and distress

A special interest of the group is the meaning of religion in the context of distress and

Supplement

Religiosity in clinical practice – some proposals

In this issues' supplement you will find an Overview of Religiosity in Clinical Practice, written by Constantin Klein from the University of Leipzig. It is based upon two longer Reviews on the Interplay of Religiosity and Health which will be published in German this year (Klein & Albani, in print; Klein et al., in print).

Constantin Klein mentions preconditions of handling religiosity in psychotherapy and raises seven questions which should be regarded concerning diagnostic investigation of religiosity. Further, he states some



diseases. So far, the effects of religiosity on coping with addiction, psychosomatic disorders and breast cancer have been investigated. Two current projects are studying religious coping with colon cancer and chronic pain. Research includes the investigation in different forms of religious coping (e.g. positive vs. negative) among different populations as well as the question whether there are German-specific aspects of religious coping (especially in comparison to findings from the United States). The role of religiosity in psychotherapy is another focus of interest.

3. Psychological aspects of contemporary religiosity

Understanding religiosity and spirituality from a psychological perspective raises questions on why, how and to what end religious forms and expressions develop. In teachings, articles and information published in press, many kinds of aspects in contemporary religion are considered. A current project includes a psychological understanding of the attractiveness of angels. For further information see: www.psychology-of-religion.de

Sebastian Murken
smurken@mainz-online.de

Support

Religion & Society - Allocation of Large Research Grants

Description: Applications will be encouraged from both less established as well as more established senior scholars. Applicants for three-year grants may also propose a single studentship in association with the project. It is expected that about eight to nine projects will be supported and the earliest start date will be October 1st, 2007.

Funding: Applications for projects of between one and three years, and with a full economic cost of between £100,000 and £600,000 are invited.

Closing Dates: January 11, March 29, 2007

Duration: 1 - 3 years

Further information: www.ahrc.ac.uk/apply/research/sfi/ahrcsi/religion_society.asp

Harold Koenig
koenig@geri.duke.edu

Announcements

12. Arbeitstagung Empirische Forschung

March 27, 2007

Egenhausen, Germany

Organisation: Akademie für Psychotherapie und Seelsorge (APS) Contact: Sigrid Schneider, info@AkademiePS.de

International Conference on Spirituality

September 21-23, 2007

Prague, Czech Republic

Organisation: Czech Moravian Psychological Society, Institute of Psychology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University, in cooperation with the International Association for the Psychology of Religion (IAPR) Contact: J. Lukavský, J. Kotrlová, L. Philipová, spirituality.prague@gmail.cz

Psychologie und Spiritualität

September, 27-30, 2007

Salzburg, Austria

Organisation: „Fachbereich Psychologie“ in cooperation with the „Katholisch Theologischen Fakultät“, „Fachbereich Praktische Theologie“

Contact: Prof. Dr. Alfons Reiter, Prof. Dr. Anton Bucher, www.sbg.ac.at/psy/events/psykongress/index.htm

Religiosität in Psychiatrie und Psychotherapie

October, 11-13, 2007

Graz, Austria

Organisation: Universitätsklinik für Psychiatrie und Universitätsklinik für medizinische Psychologie und Psychotherapie, Medizinische Universität Graz

Contact: Sabine Schröttner, Monika Scheibl, info@rpp2007.org

European Conference on "Religion, Spirituality, and Health" with Prof. Dr. Harold Koenig

May 2008

Bern, Switzerland

The focus of the conference is to gather European researchers and clinicians in the field. Contact and information: René Hefti, M.D., info@rish.ch, www.rish.ch

Research Workshop on "Religion, Spirituality, and Health" with Prof. Harold Koenig

May 2008

Preceding the above announced conference there will be the opportunity to participate in a 3 to 4-day research workshop with Prof. Koenig, accepting participants of any education level or degree.

Contact and information: René Hefti, M.D., info@rish.ch, www.rish.ch

New Publications

- Research Institute for Spirituality and Health (Ed., 2007). Glaube und seelische Gesundheit - Forschungsergebnisse und klinische Relevanz. Langenthal: RSH Publikationen.
- Büssing, Ostermann, Glöckler, Matthiessen (Eds, 2006): Spiritualität, Krankheit und Heilung – Bedeutung und Ausdrucksformen der Spiritualität in der Medizin. VAS-Verlag (12/2006). Mit einem Schlusswort von Harold G. Koenig.
- Büssing, Ostermann, Matthiessen (in press): Distinct expressions of vital spirituality. The ASP questionnaire as an explorative research tool. Journal of Religion and Health
- Büssing, Ostermann, Koenig (in press): Relevance of religion and spirituality in German patients with chronic diseases. Int. Journal of Psychiatry and Medicine

Impressum

This Newsletter is published quarterly by the Research Institute of Spirituality and Health, Langenthal, Switzerland.

Editorial board: René Hefti, Franz Fischer, Maria Teschner.

Research Institute for Spirituality and Health

Weissensteinstrasse 30

CH-4900 Langenthal

Switzerland

Tel. +41 (62) 919 22 11

Fax +41 (62) 919 22 00

info@rish.ch

www.rish.ch