

Title: Spirituality/religiousness/altruism and substance abuse treatment outcomes: A comparison between black and white adolescents.

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Summary:

Aims: Spirituality, religiousness, and communalism are strengths of the African American community. Prior research among adult alcohol populations has shown a stronger link between purpose in life and better treatment outcomes for black participants. Extending prior work to adolescent substance dependent populations, this study compares black and white youth in the strength of the link between spirituality, religiousness, and altruism and treatment outcomes.

Methods: The sample included 193 substance dependent youths admitted into chemical dependency residential treatment. Inclusion criteria were stable contact information, 14–18 years of age, consent, DSMIV criteria for substance dependency, and medical detoxification. Youth with a major chronic health problem or who were suicidal or homicidal were excluded. Study instruments were administered at intake and end of treatment. Spirituality/religiosity was assessed with the DSES and the RBB. Altruism was assessed with the SOS and the GSS. Treatment outcomes assessed were the GAATOR and the AOCDS.

Independent variables in multiple regression models predicting treatment outcomes were spirituality/religiosity, altruism, race, and interaction terms with race. **Results:** In comparison to white youth, black youth entered treatment with higher DSE, RBB, and GSS scores, and were discharged with equivalent GAATOR and AOCDS scores. Results of the first regression model showed a significant link between higher SOS and lower AOCDS scores. In the second regression model, higher SOS, RBB, and DSES scores were significantly related to higher GAATOR scores. No significant interactions with race were found in relation to treatment outcomes. **Conclusions:** This study found belief factors to be more elevated among black youth, and found significant relationships between belief factors and treatment outcomes for the combined sample. The significant relationship between belief factors and treatment outcomes shown in this study may be independent of race.

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