

Editorial

Diversity of Topics, Methods, Perspectives and Disciplines

We have a diverse mix of articles in this issue, which I am delighted to see. They are diverse with respect to the topics they explore, the methods they use, the perspectives they offer, and the professional disciplines of their authors.

The authors of the first article include psychologists, chaplains, pastoral counselors, and theologians, all of whom are active healthcare researchers. The article summarizes the findings of a qualitative study of chaplains' attitudes about quality assurance research. Among other things, the findings indicate that many chaplains feel uneasy about trying to measure spiritual care because they see it as being unmeasurable.

The author of the second article is a psychologist who reviews research on prayer as a method of coping, and offers some psychological insights into the value of personal prayer. He builds on the Jamesian concept of prayer as "inward communication or conversation with a power recognized as divine," and uses well-known psychological constructs to offer a theoretical explanation of how and why prayer contributes to the relief of distress.

In the third article, a rabbinical scholar traces the historical origins of *Bikkur Holim*, the Jewish mandate "to visit the sick," and the roots of pastoral care within Judaism. The author proposes Ezekiel 34 as the source for the rabbinic term, *Bikkur Holim*, as well as the conceptual basis for Jewish pastoral care. The very next article looks at the recent history of professional chaplaincy in Australia, England, Scotland, and the United States. The author, a psychologist, paints a picture of change, as chaplains adapt to new performance expectations within the hospital systems in their countries.

After that comes a quantitative study by a psychologist, two chaplains, and other health researchers that compares students' perspectives about their pastoral skills before and after taking a full-time summer unit or an extended unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Although the results are preliminary, in my mind, the study uses some interesting outcomes measures (e.g., self-awareness, emotional intelligence) that appear to be affected by CPE to varying degrees.

The last article is another quantitative study by a chaplain and two of his colleagues who are healthcare researchers. The study explores the views of

adolescents with cystic fibrosis, and their parents, about the sanctity of the body and their willingness to discuss spiritual issues.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the authors for their contributions to the journal and the field of professional chaplaincy. I hope we have as interesting a mix of articles in issues to come.

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Editor-in-Chief