

P-901 - CAN RELIGIOSITY AFFECT HOW WE COPE WITH LONELINESS?

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Introduction: Loneliness is a universal experience, which transcends age, gender, geography, and culture. Religion, and one's degree of religiosity, is known to significantly affect one's approach to life, behaviour, and social involvement.

Objectives: To understand how religiosity affects the coping methods used to deal with loneliness.

Aim: Explore whether the coping with loneliness is influenced by one's degree of religious observance.

Method: A total of two hundred and fifty participants who were composed of 28 secular/traditional, 54 conservative and 168 orthodox, self-identified Jews living in Israel volunteered to partake in the study. They answered a 34 yes/no loneliness questionnaire which tapped the following coping techniques: Reflection & acceptance; Self-development & understanding; Social support network; Distancing & denial; Religion & faith; and Increased activity Results indicated that the three groups significantly differed in their manner of coping with loneliness only on the Religion & Faith subscale, which was intuitively expected.

Results: An overall MANCOVA did yield significant group differences in the means of coping with loneliness. ANCOVAs were subsequently calculated. Significant differences amongst the three groups were found in the Religion and Faith subscale, with Bonferroni indicating that both the Conservative and Orthodox groups reported significantly greater use of religion and faith as a means of coping than those adopting a secular or traditional approach to religion.

Conclusions: Religiosity does affect the manner of coping with loneliness. The present was a preliminary study directed at Israeli Jews. Similar studies with people of other religious denominations could further highlight that issue.