Protective associations of importance of religion and frequency of service attendance with depression risk, suicidal behaviours and substance use in adolescents in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Rasic D, Kisely S, Langille DB.
Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Abstract

PURPOSE: We examined relationships of measures of personal importance of religion and frequency of attendance at religious services with risk of depression and risk behaviours in high school students in Cape Breton, Canada. We examined the impact of confounding and explanatory factors on these relationships.

METHODS: Data were drawn from self-report surveys of adolescents aged 15-19 (N=1615) at three high schools in May, 2006. We used logistic regression to assess associations of religious importance and religious service attendance with risk of depression, suicidal behaviour, binge drinking and frequent marijuana use, controlling in multivariate models for sociodemographic factors, family structure and social capital.

RESULTS: Among females, higher personal importance of religion was associated with decreased odds of depression, suicidal ideation, drinking and marijuana use, while more religious attendance was protective for substance use behaviours and suicidal ideation. In males, both measures of religiosity were associated with decreased substance use. In multivariate models, religious importance had weak protective effects for depression and suicidal thinking in females, which were respectively modified by social trust and substance use. Attendance was protective for suicidal thinking in females, and was modified by depression. These associations were not seen in males. Attendance was consistently associated with less substance use in females, while importance was not. Importance was consistently protective for marijuana use and attendance was protective for binge drinking in males.

LIMITATIONS: This was a cross-sectional self-report survey and causality cannot be inferred.

CONCLUSION: Protective associations of measures of religiosity are seen in Canadian adolescents, as they are elsewhere.

Copyright © 2011 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

PMID: 21458077 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]