BOOK TITLE: Health and Well-Being in Islamic Societies: Background, Research, and Applications.

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*BOOK PUBLICATION INFORMATION: New York, NY:
Springer International Publishing, 2014, 361 pp, ISBN
978-3-319-05872-6*

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Cultural competency. Strength-based approaches. Utopian visions of interfaith harmony. *Health and Well-Being in Islamic Societies: Background, Research, and Applications*, the first major work in English to survey the body of research on the connections between mental and physical health outcomes and the religion of Islam, brings together all of these crucial areas for Muslim mental health while presenting a wealth of concrete research in a compact format. An overview of 50 years of national and international studies leading up to 2010, this book provides a valuable compendium of knowledge regarding scientific studies of the impact of religion and spirituality on health while aspiring to encourage research and public health to reach higher and loftier goals. While now in 2018 there is a far greater body of research that has been done that is not covered in this book, the book continues to be a quality resource for the background on health and Islam, as well as providing much insight into the topic.

The book was written by Dr. Harold Koenig and Dr. Saad Al Shohaib, both eminent doctors and faculty members at the Center for Spirituality, Religion, and Health at Duke University, where Dr. Koenig serves as the Director. Dr. Koenig is on the faculty of Duke University as Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and Associate Professor of Medicine, at the Department of Medicine at King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, as well as being on the faculty of the School of Public Health at Ningxia Medical University, Yinchuan, and People's Republic of China. He has published over 500 peer-

reviewed articles and has dozens of books in print. He has appeared on national and international TV news programs including *ABC's World News Tonight*, *Dr. Oz Show*, and *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, and *NBC Nightly News* as well as in hundreds of newspapers and magazines including *Reader's Digest*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*. Dr. Shohaib is a Professor of Medicine and Nephrology in King Abdul-Aziz University and has published dozens of papers in peer-reviewed journals on a variety of topics in medicine, religion, spirituality and health. The high level of expertise of these two authors contributes to the excellence of the treatment of the topics covered in this book.

"Part I: Background" has 5 chapters. Chapter 1-3 cover topics related to Muslims including the historical background of Islamic medicine from pre-Islamic times to the present, and Muslim beliefs, including Muslim beliefs about health, healing and healthcare. While these chapters are interesting and informative, it is far from a comprehensive treatment of these topics. Because all the sections are very short, much information is left out. For example, the section on Islamic physicians doesn't even mention some major important thinkers, among them Abu Zayd Al-Bhalki, undoubtedly one of the major contributors to Islamic psychology and psychiatry. Chapter 4 discusses general Christian beliefs as well as beliefs on health and healing. Chapter 5 discusses differences and similarities between Christian and Muslim beliefs, practices and values, including references from the Quran. One of the unique features of this comparison, according to the authors, is the level handed treatment of both faiths, in part due to the fact that one of the authors is from the Christian tradition while the other is from the Muslim tradition.

"Part II: Research" contains 8 chapters and comprises the bulk of the text. Part II starts out with a brief survey of research on religion and health from Christian-majority samples in Chapter 6. The authors state that 90% of the current literature on religion, spirituality and health is based on Christian-majority samples and state that they intend to further the development of this category of research for Muslims and Muslim-majority countries. The section on research on Christianity and health highlights this point due to the large numbers of studies the literature uncovered related to Christianity-majority samples relative to the far fewer number based on Muslim-majority samples. Chapters 7-11 cover the author's literature review on health in Muslims, including negative emotions (Chapter 7), positive emotions (Chapter 8), social health (Chapter 9), behavioral health (Chapter 10) and physical health (Chapter 11). These sections provide such a comprehensive overview of the benefits of Islam as a religion for health that the book is an invaluable resource for strength-based research, researchers, and approaches. Literally hundreds of studies are covered, including sections on missed studies. Each of the chapters 7-11 are divided into individual sections based on specific health outcomes. For example, Chapter 8 on Positive Emotions is divided into sections on well-being, hope,

optimism, meaning and purpose, self-esteem, sense of control, and personality traits followed by a section on summary and conclusions. This parallels the organization of all of the chapters on health outcomes, with multiple sections detailing research studies on individual topics that fall under each Chapter heading. Within each of these sections there is a detailed description of each of the studies that the survey of research uncovered. For example, the section on well-being provides detailed descriptions of 14 different studies and references a total of 20. Interestingly, all of these studies found a positive relationship between well-being and being Muslim. Part II of the book provides a wealth of information for people wanting to better understand the comprehensive positive effects of Islam on health. Chapter 12 and 13 discuss the implications of these findings for understanding how Islam impacts health and directions in research. While the research the book covers does not extend past 2012, and there has been an explosion of work done in the last seven to eight years, the research findings, as well as the literature review as whole continue to be valuable and applicable, and as of now there is no other book in English that provides the comprehensive insights this book makes available.

The final section of the book, "Part III: Applications" has three chapters, one on clinical applications (Chapter 14), and one on applications for these findings for public health (Chapter 15) and Chapter 16, where the authors provide a summary and conclusions. There is a strong consensus among Muslim mental health professionals that culturally competent treatment of Muslims requires a strength-based perspective on the religion of Islam. This book provides unequivocal scientific support for the conclusion that Islam is good for health in many ways. In their discussion of science, the authors at times go far beyond the simple reports on scientific studies, or even the relationship of religious beliefs to science. The authors argue for the strong findings in health and religion to be a starting place for Muslim-Christian relationships as Muslim and Christian researchers attend the same meetings for their organizations, and science relies on cooperation and dialogue. This book goes far beyond merely authoritatively establishing the positive health benefits of both Christianity and Islam. The book proposes a utopian vision for Muslim-Christian relationships based on the common ground the book so eloquently reveals. As the authors state, "a new Golden Age is now within our grasp, but it will require Muslims and Christians working side-by-side as brothers and sisters submitted to one God. Failure to do so, on the other hand, will also have consequences for health both on the individual and societal level." (pg. 347) The overview of the history of Islamic medicine, the careful presentation of such a huge body of research, and the lofty implications for these findings for human society, make this book a must-read for any mental health professional.

REFERENCE

Koenig, Harold G. and Al Shohaib, Saad (2014) *Health and Well-Being in Islamic Societies: Background, Research, and Applications*. New York, NY: Springer International Publishing