

# Research in Germany: Psychiatric Staff's Religious/Spiritual Belief and Its Influence on the Therapeutic process

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In cooperation with dept. of psychiatry and psychotherapy  
Prof. Dr. med. M. Berger & Dr. med. A. Zahn

Symposium IV: Doctors Beliefs  
Malta, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014



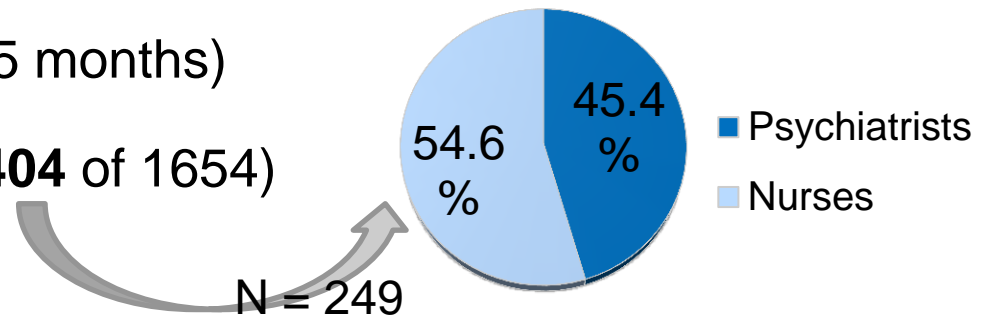
## ▪ Main questions

- Staff's self-assessment regarding their own religiosity/spirituality
- Staff's attitudes towards religiosity/spirituality of patients in their therapeutic process
- The influence of staff's own religiosity/spirituality on their attitudes

## ▪ Target group

- Staff working in the field of psychiatry and psychotherapy
- Medical, therapeutic and nursing staff

- Dpt. of psychiatry and psychotherapy  
in German University- and selected confessional clinics  
(participation: **21** of 53 Clinics)
- From Oct. 2010 to Feb. 2011 (5 months)
- Response rate: **24.43** % ( $N = 404$  of 1654)
- DUREL,  
Curlin et al.'s questionnaire on *Religion and Spirituality  
in Medicine: Physicians' Perspectives*  
& some additional questions



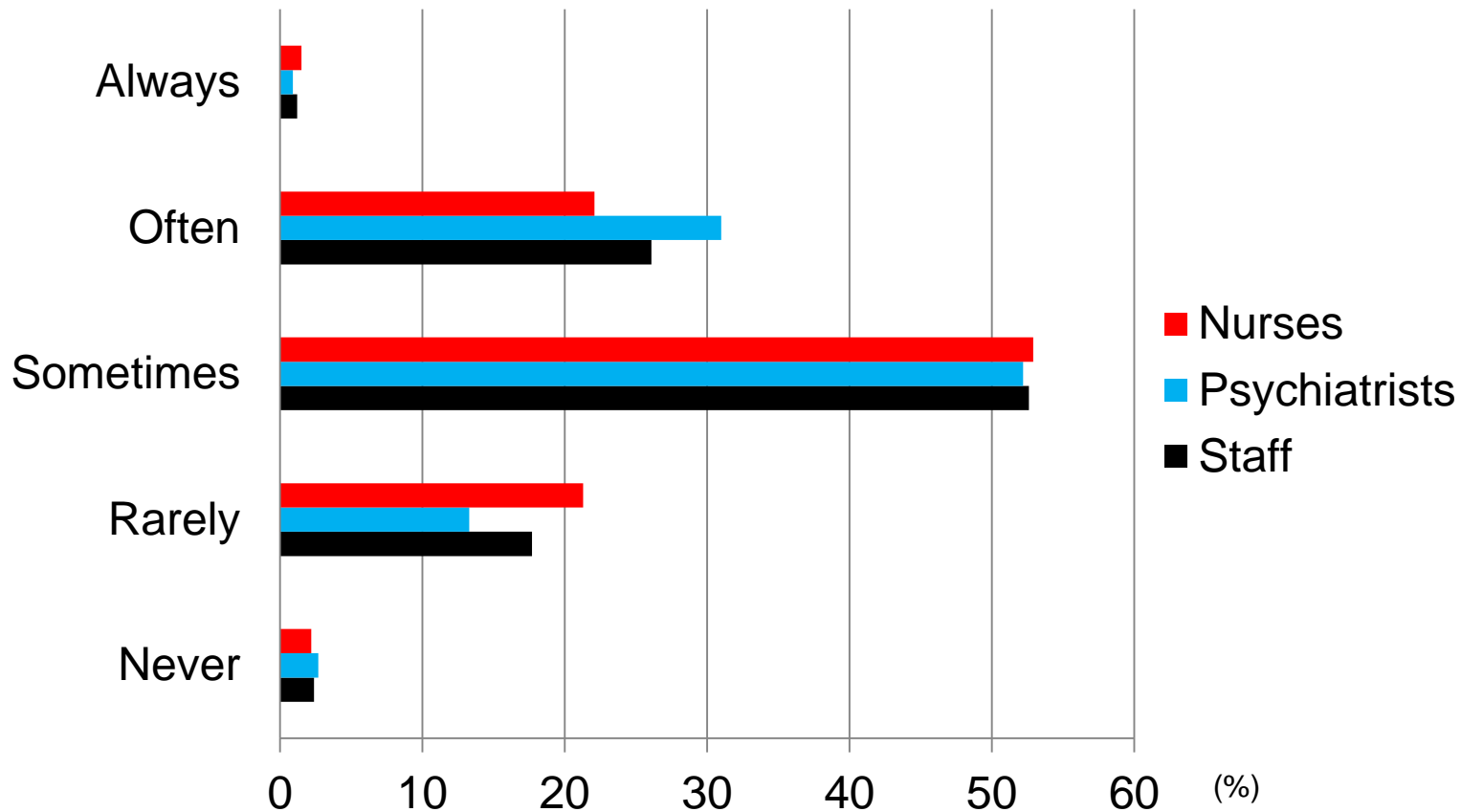
# Experience with religious/spiritual issues - 1

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**The influence of religiosity/spirituality on health is generally positive.**



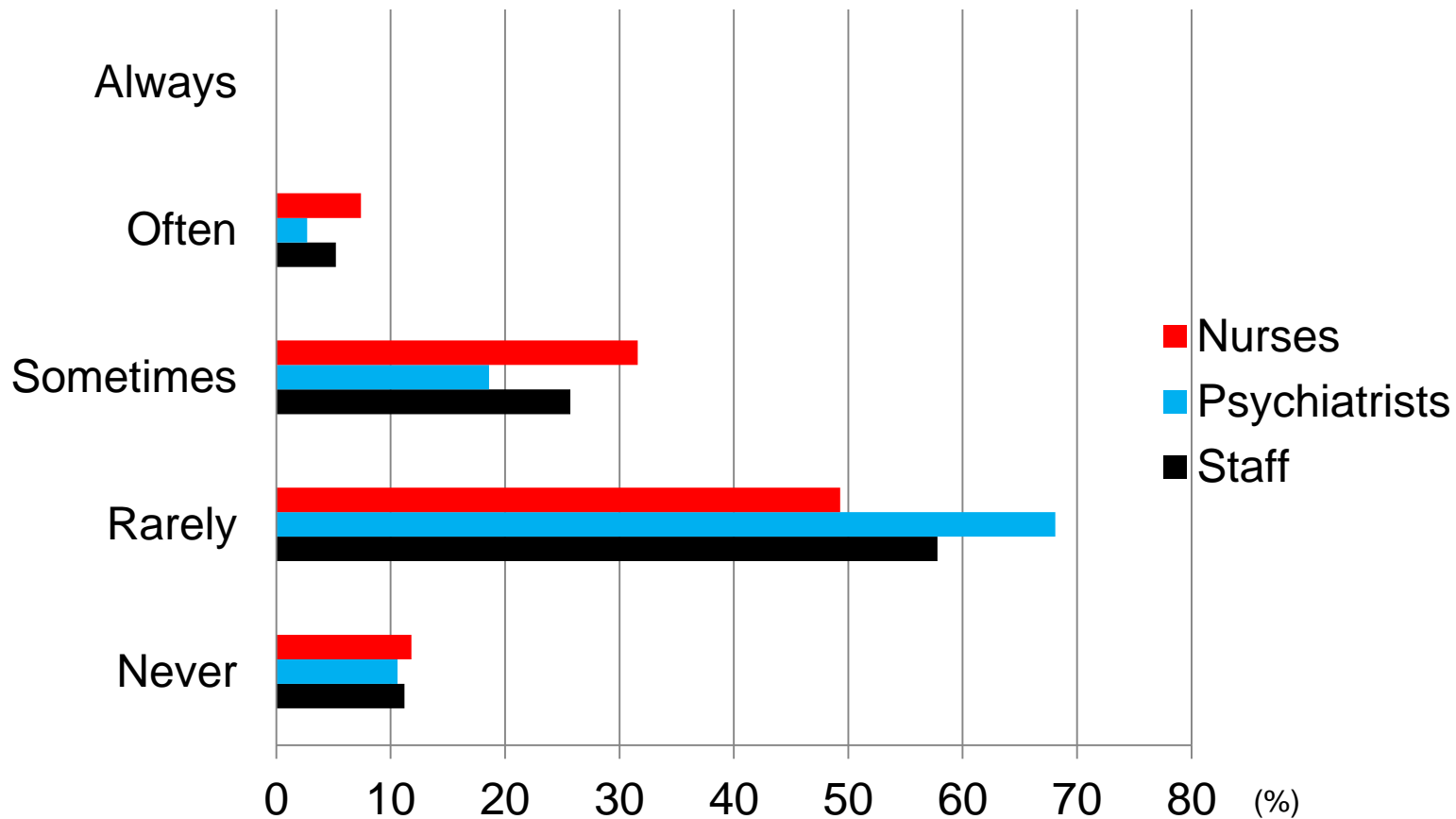
# Experience with religious/spiritual issues - 2

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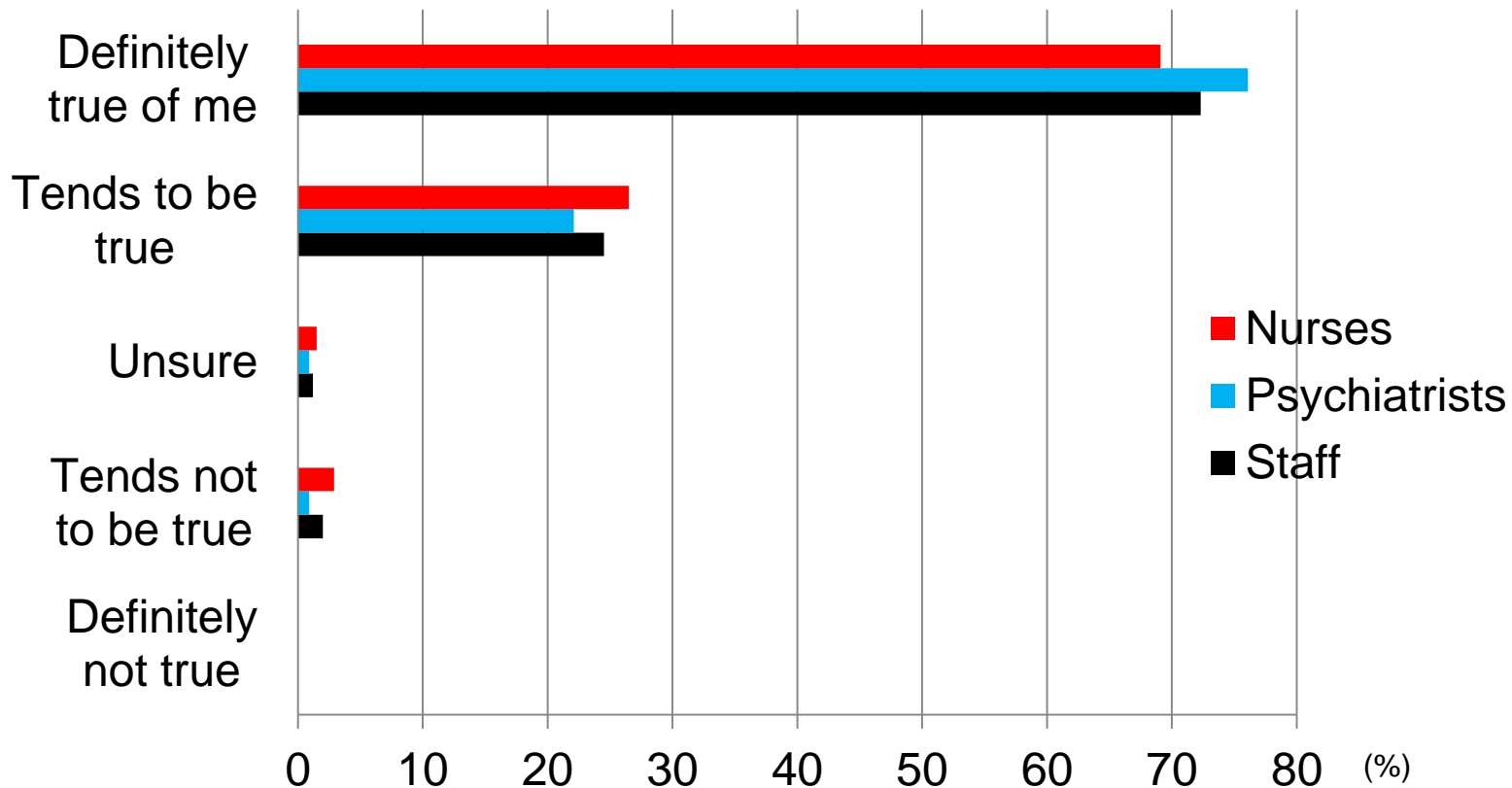
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**Patients used religiosity/spirituality as a reason to avoid taking responsibility for their own health.**



# Attitudes towards religiosity/spirituality -1

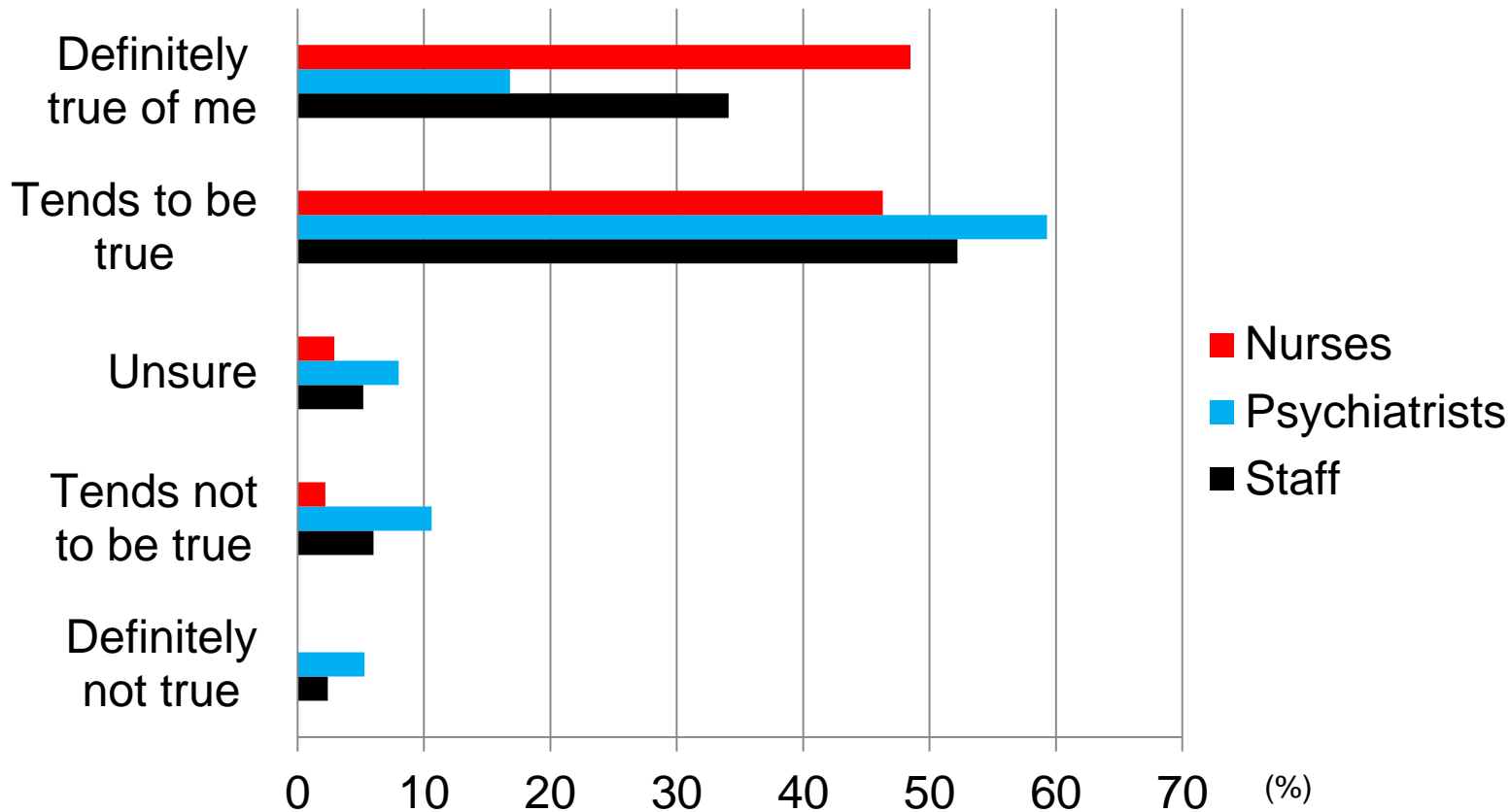
**I listen carefully and empathetically, when religious/spiritual issues come up in discussions with patients.**



# Attitudes towards religiosity/spirituality -2



**I refer patients to chaplains, when religious/spiritual issues come up in discussions with patients.**



# Intrinsic religiosity according to DUREL

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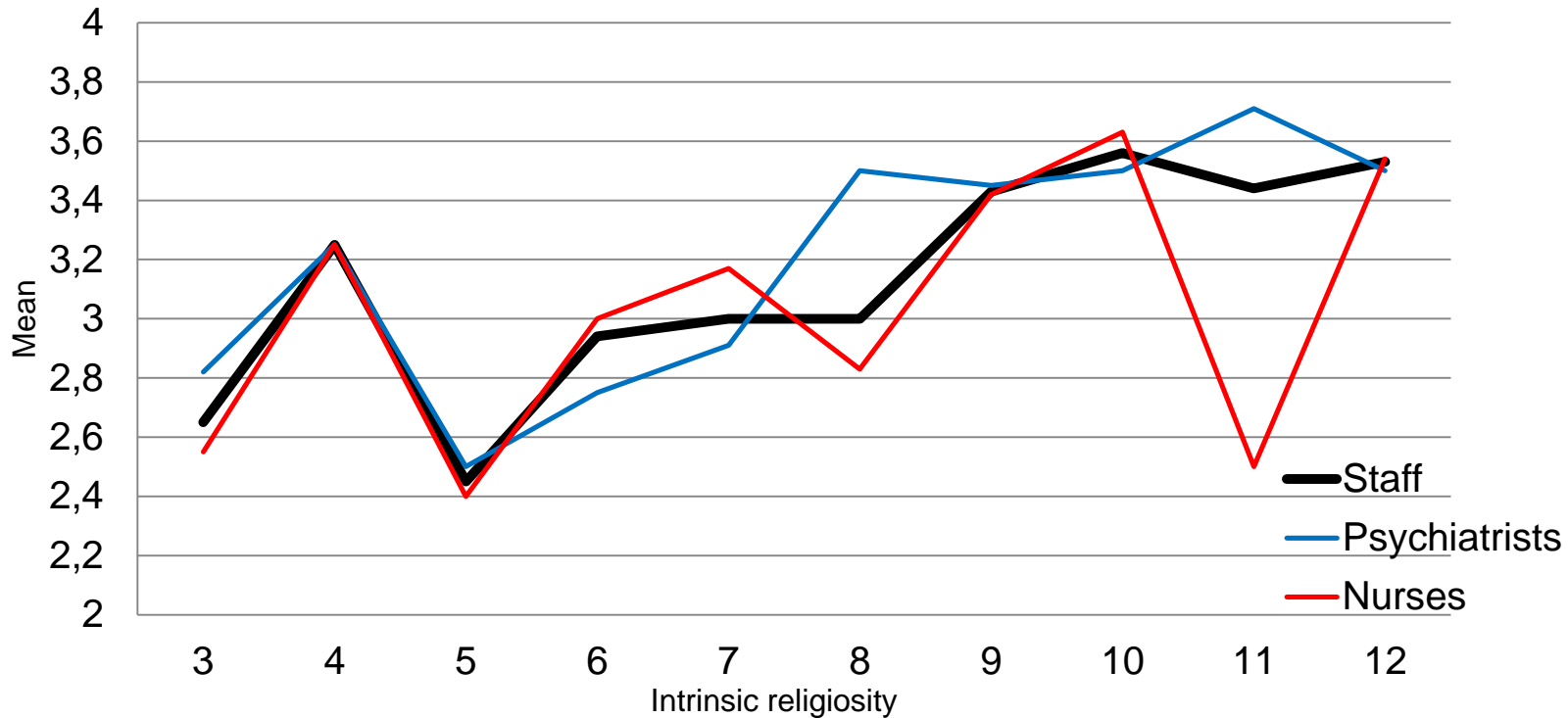
	Definitely true of me	Tends to be true	Unsure	Tends not to be true	Definitely not true
	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Religious beliefs influence my whole approach to life</b>	44 (17.7)	83 (33.3)	10 (4.0)	46 (18.5)	66 (26.5)
<b>Try to carry religion into other aspects of life</b>	32 (12.9)	65 (26.1)	15 (6.0)	58 (23.3)	79 (31.7)
<b>Experience God's presence</b>	34 (13.7)	59 (23.7)	32 (12.9)	41 (16.5)	83 (33.3)

M = 6.70 ( $\pm$  3.12), N = 204

- Psychiatrists: 6.74  $\pm$  3.09
- Nurses: 6.69  $\pm$  3.16



**The influence of religiosity/spirituality on health is generally positive.**

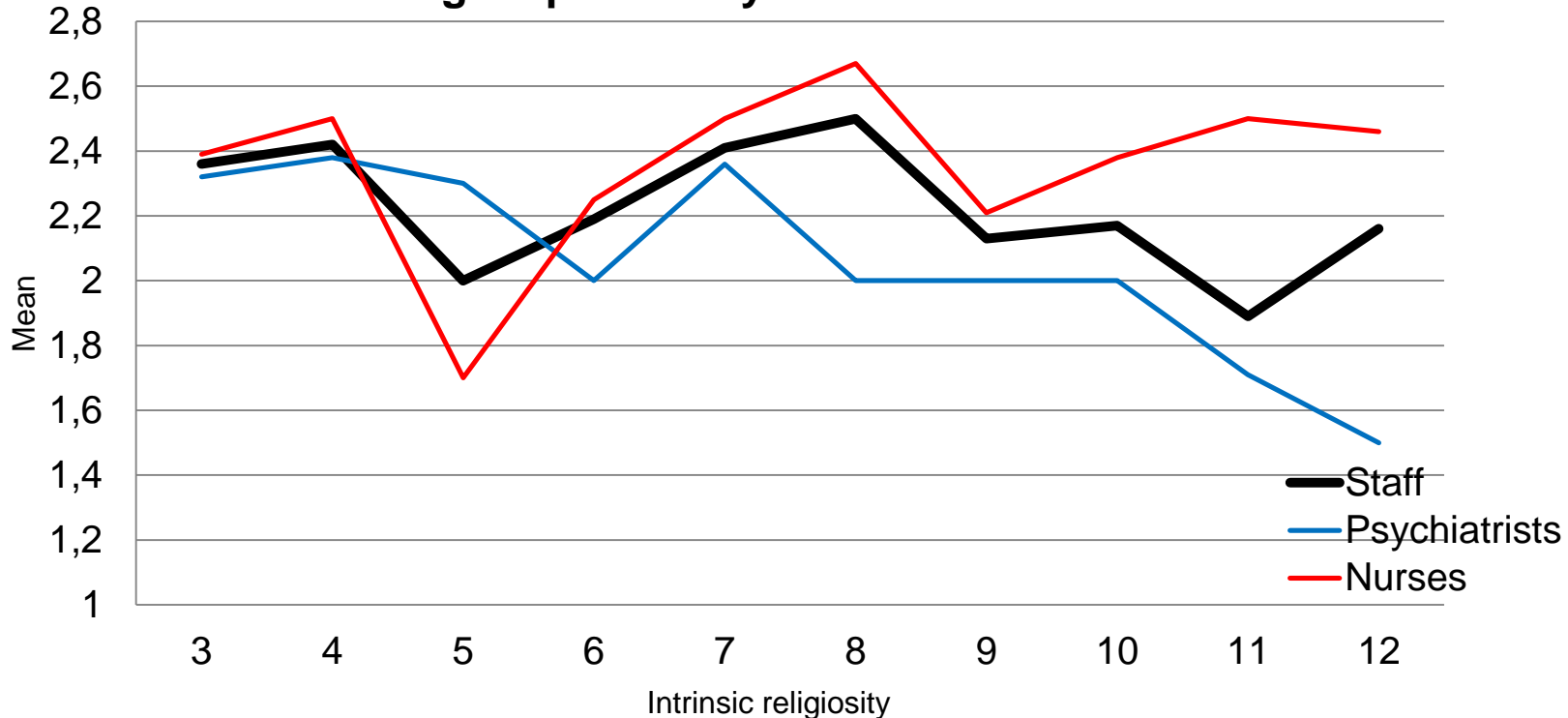


1-tailed correlation (Spearman):  $r = 0.440$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Psychiatrists:  $r = 0.405$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Nursing staff:  $r = 0.461$ ,  $p < 0.001$

### Patients used religiosity/spirituality as a reason to avoid taking responsibility for their own health.

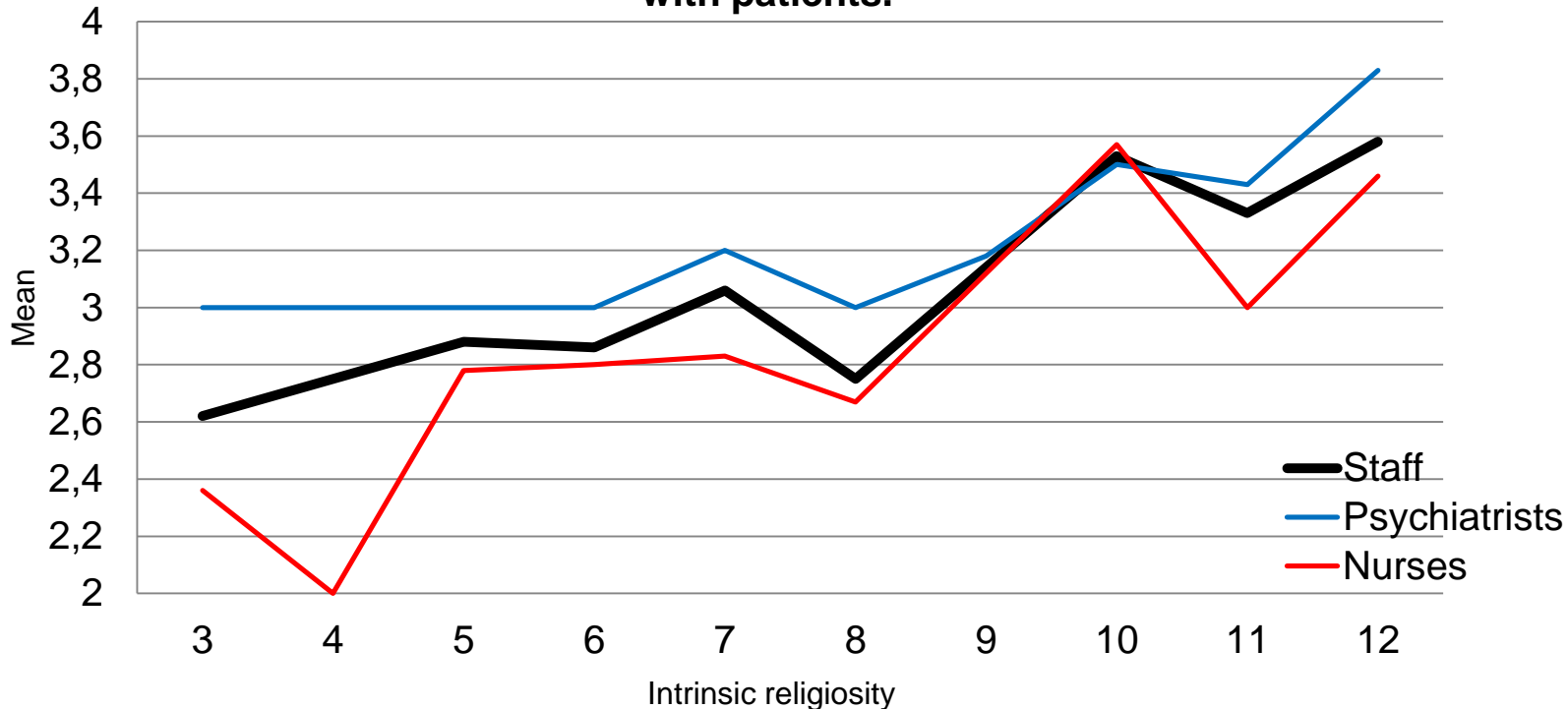


1-tailed correlation (Spearman):  $r = -0.121$ ,  $p = 0.042$

Psychiatrists:  $r = -0.346$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Nursing staff:  $r = 0.027$ ,  $p = 0.389$

**I encourage patients in their own religious/spiritual beliefs and practices, when religious/spiritual issues come up in discussions with patients.**

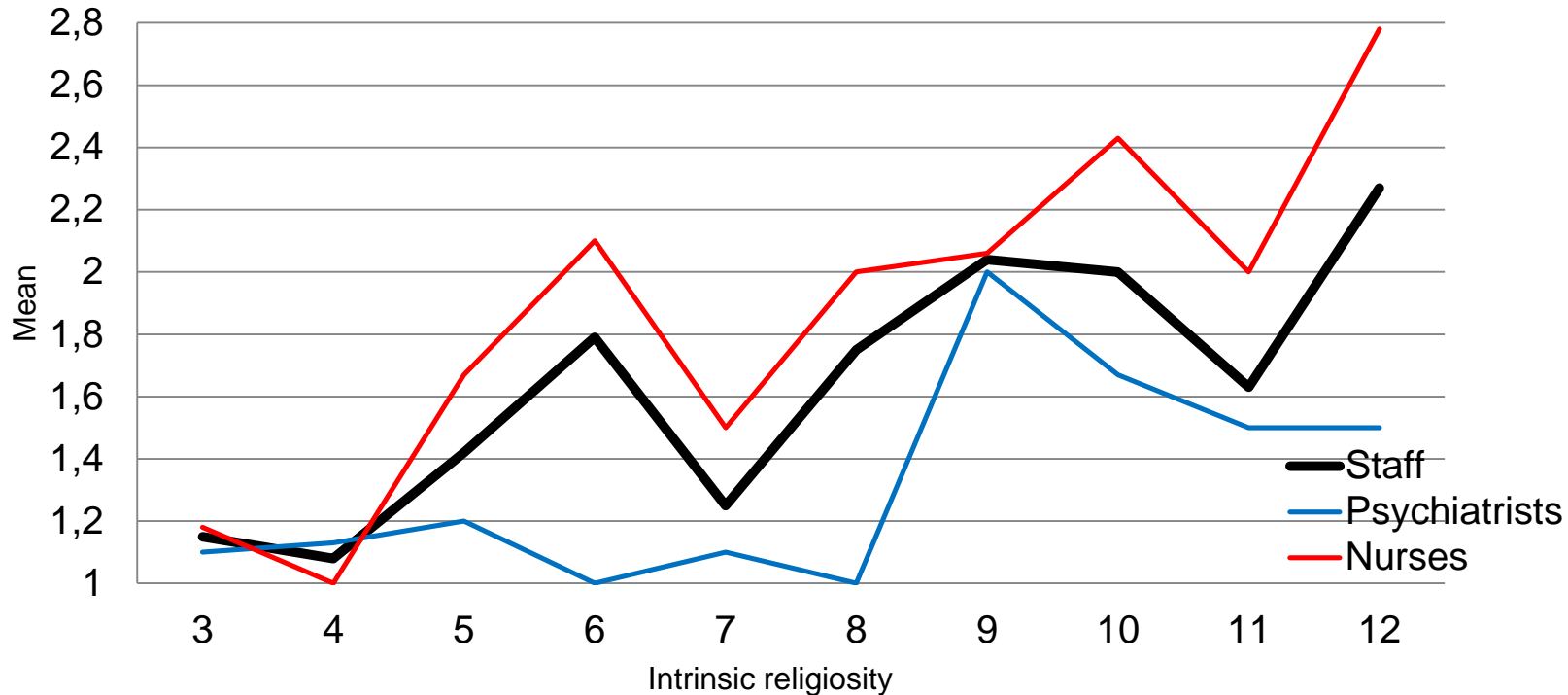


1-tailed correlation (Spearman):  $r = 0.399$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Psychiatrists:  $r = 0.304$ ,  $p = 0.003$

Nursing staff:  $r = 0.475$ ,  $p < 0.001$

In general, it is appropriate to pray with a patient together



1-tailed correlation (Spearman):  $r = 0.479$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Psychiatrists:  $r = 0.444$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Nursing staff:  $r = 0.547$ ,  $p < 0.001$

# Reasons: Why psychiatric staff does not talk about religious/spiritual issues with patients

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- The personal religiosity/spirituality has an influence on staff's attitudes towards religiosity/spirituality.
- Q. Is it possible that psychiatric staff can be neutral with religious/spiritual issues?
- Q. How aware is psychiatric staff about their own religious/spiritual characteristics as well as their attitudes towards religiosity/spirituality?

# Thank you for your attention!

*Further questions & information via:  
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*FRIAS-IRG (Baumann, Büssing, Hvidt) have initiated  
**Network of Research on Spirituality and Health:**  
[www.nersh.org](http://www.nersh.org)*

#### References:

- Eunmi Lee (2014): Religiosität bzw. Spiritualität in Psychiatrie und Psychotherapie. Ihre Bedeutung für psychiatrisches Wirken aus der Sicht des psychiatrischen Personals anhand einer bundesweiten Personalbefragung. Echter Verlag; Würzburg.
- Eunmi Lee and Klaus Baumann (2013): German Psychiatrists' Observation and Interpretation of Religiosity/Spirituality, in: Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/280168>.