



# Doctors' religiosity and belief in miracles



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## INTRODUCTION:

Majority of publications on the perception of miraculous healings is based on general society's opinion and non-professional respondents. There is little research on professionals', especially physicians' perception of miraculous healings. Sometimes, the conviction can be expressed that belief in miracles can be shared by uneducated people, but scientists and physicians do not believe (or should not believe) in miracles. Some authors indicate that belief in miracles can shape physician attitudes, e.g. justify the use of public resources to keep patients on life support while waiting for a miracle (Savulescu, 2007). Physicians also play a very important role in the Catholic Church during theological process known as beatification or canonization. They certify to the ecclesiastical authorities that a physical cure produced by a miracle cannot be explained by current medical knowledge. (Hurvey 2007)

## AIM OF THE RESEARCH:

- Description of the doctors' beliefs in miraculous healings
- Relation between beliefs in miraculous healings and religiosity, and years of work experience

## PARTICIPANTS:

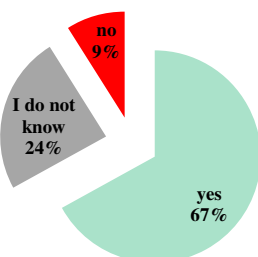
- N= 324 Polish physicians;
- 51% women, 49% men;
- Age: 18 – 30 years (M=21,5; SD=2,31);
- Average work experience: 17.03 years;
- Denomination: 93% Catholics.

## METHODS:

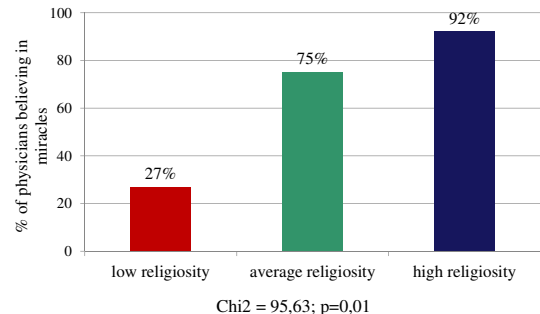
- Questions related to:
  - the belief in miracles (understood as God's intervention)
  - the observation of patients' unexplained recoveries.
- Polish Scale of Religious Attitudes (SReAt) (Śliwak & Bartzuk, 2011),

## RESULTS:

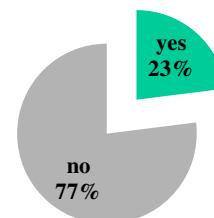
Do you believe in miracles (understood as God's intervention)?



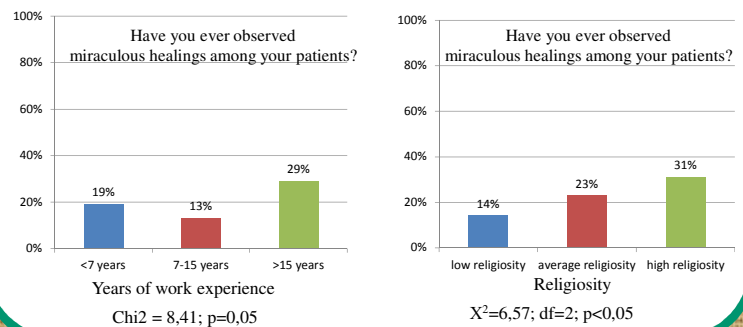
## Religiosity and the belief in miracles among physicians



## Have you ever observed miraculous healings among your patients?



## Religiosity, work experience and the observation of miraculous healings



## CONCLUSION:

- Majority of the physicians are open minded to the transcendent interpretation of patients' unexplained recoveries.
- Religiosity is an important factor shaping doctors' beliefs in miracles and their interpretation of medically unexplained recoveries.
- Doctors' religiosity can play a role in certifying an inexplicable cure to the ecclesiastical authorities in beatification or canonization processes in the Catholic Church

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