

What are the experiences of spirituality amongst people with mental health problems?

Introduction

Spirituality remains poorly understood in clinical practice. Much of the literature focuses on professionals' understanding of spirituality but where are the voices of people with mental health problems? A systematic literature review was conducted to understand the experience of spirituality from the perspective of people with mental health problems.

Method

Databases searched:

CINAHL, Medline, PsychINFO, AMED, ASSIA

Search terms used:

Population – mental health, mental disorder, psych*, patients, service users

Exposure – spirit*, relig*, spiritual care

Outcome – lived experience, attitudes, perceptions

Results

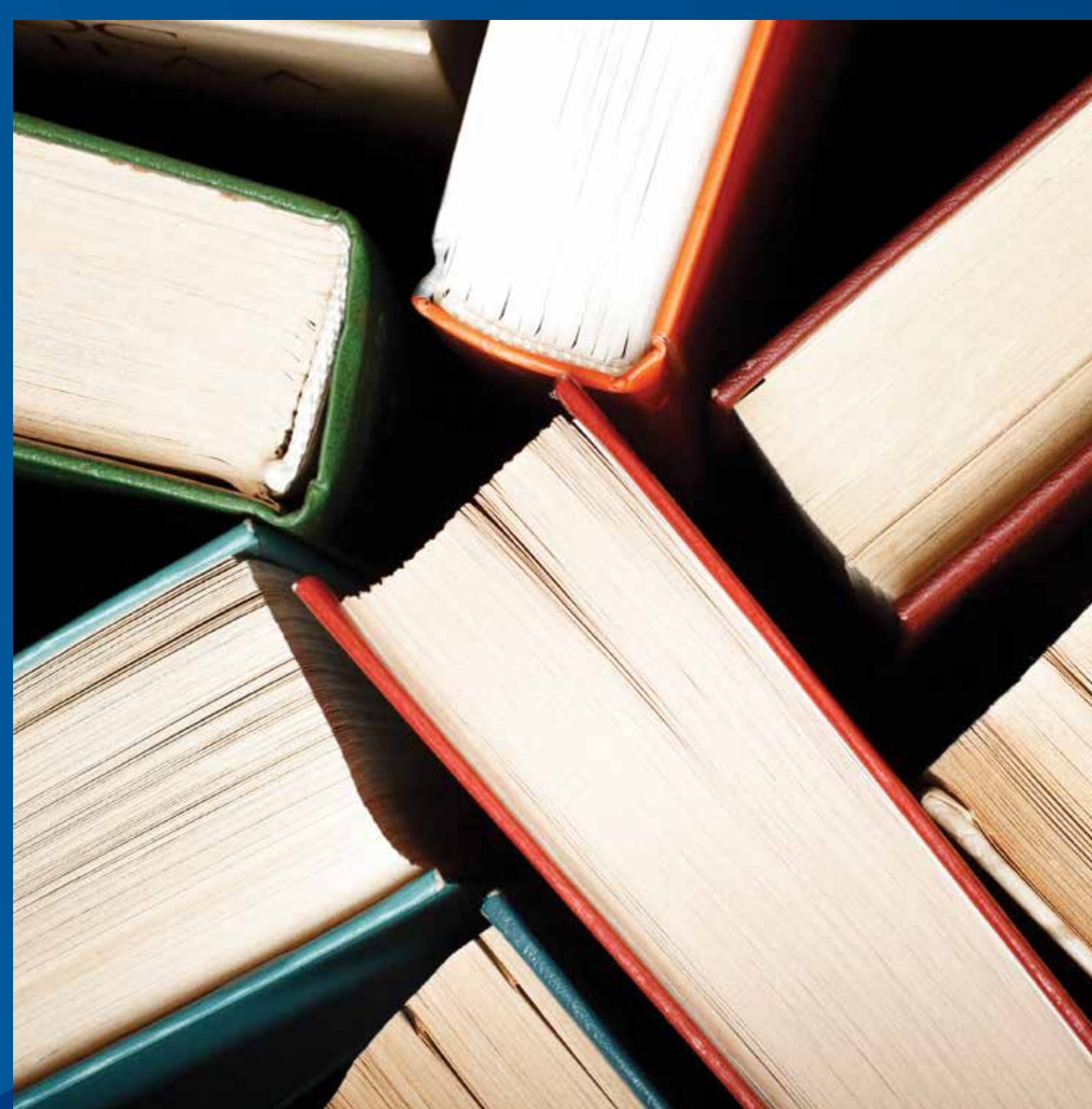
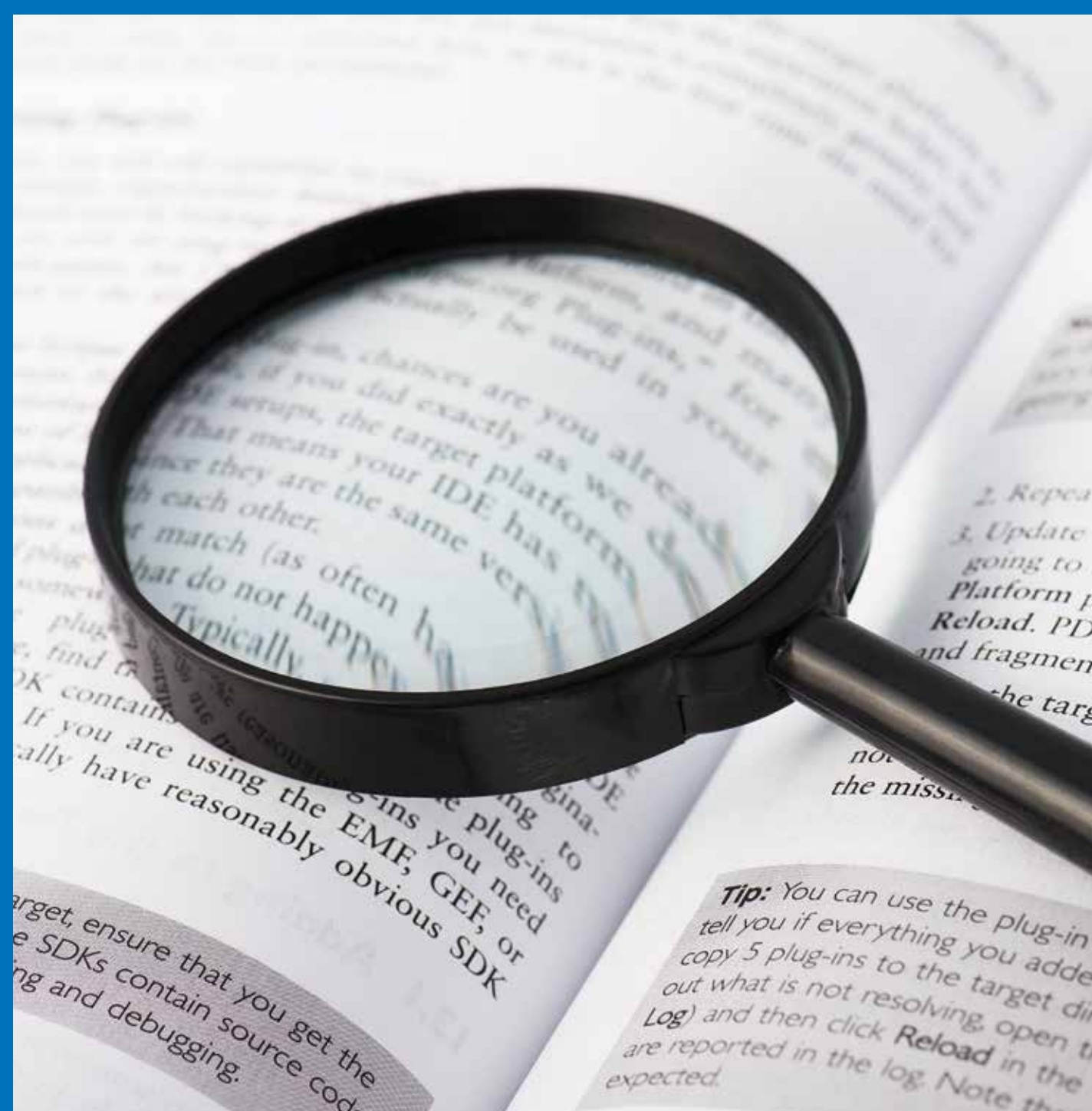
Number of articles found: 8

UK based articles: 1. 2 from USA, 3 from Australia, 1 from Taiwan, 1 from Sweden.

All qualitative studies. Data collection methods: Interviews – 7. Focus groups: 1

Demographics: Adults, mixture of men and women

Unexpected issues: Lack of cultural diversity in the range of participants



Discussion

- Spirituality is highly individual
- Spirituality is significant when people become mentally unwell
- People with mental health problems wish to have their spiritual needs addressed
- Spirituality is a lifelong journey
- Individuals want to talk about their beliefs but fear that spiritual activity will be viewed as mental illness
- Spirituality has a positive impact on recovery from mental illness

Summary

Gap in knowledge:

Most participants were White Anglo-Saxon people. More research is needed with people from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds.

Implications for practice – staff need to listen to clients and acknowledge spiritual beliefs in order to provide holistic care. We need to learn more about how people experience their spirituality.

Contact

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References

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- Bettany-Saltikov, J. (2012) *How to do a Systematic Literature review in Nursing: A Step-by Step Guide*. Maidenhead: Open University Press