



Belief in God may improve treatment for those suffering with depression, says a new study.

Faith in a higher being has been found to significantly improve treatment for people suffering with a psychiatric illness, according to research carried out by McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts. Researchers followed 159 patients over the course of a year at the Behavioral Health Partial Hospital program at McLean to investigate the relationship between a patient's level of belief in God, expectations for treatment and actual treatment outcomes. Each participant was asked to gauge their belief in God as well as their expectations for treatment outcome on a five-point scale.

Levels of depression, wellbeing, and self-harm were assessed at the beginning and end of their treatment program.

Researchers found that patients with 'no' or only 'slight' belief in God were twice as likely not to respond to treatment than patients with higher levels of belief.

And more than 30 per cent of patients claiming no specific religious affiliation still saw the same benefits in treatment if their belief in God was rated as moderately or very high.

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Researchers concluded that a belief in God is associated with improved treatment outcomes in psychiatric care.

The study, published in the Journal of Affective Disorders, said : 'Our work suggests that people with a moderate to high level of belief in a higher power do significantly better in short-term psychiatric treatment than those without, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Belief was associated with not only improved psychological wellbeing, but a decrease in depression and intention to self-harm, explained David Rosmarin, McLean Hospital clinician and instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical.

He added: 'I hope that this work will lead to larger studies and increased funding in order to help as many people as possible.'

Previous studies have highlighted the power of prayer on a person's health.



Alone: Psychiatric disorders can be very isolating for the sufferer but a belief in God can help, say researchers.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2314781/Believing-God-help-treat-depression.html#ixzz2THP8Oale>

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