

Robinson, E.A.R., Brower, K.J. & Kurtz, E. (2003). Life-changing experiences, spirituality and religiousness of persons entering treatment for alcohol problems. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 21(4), 3-16.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J020v21n04_02#.VKVIIyvF9AE

ABSTRACT

There is little empirical data published on the spirituality and religiousness of persons entering treatment for alcohol problems, particularly in comparison to a national sample. The frequency of life-changing spiritual and religious experiences in this treatment population is also unknown, although there is much speculation and a few qualitative studies on the role that such experiences may play in recovery. This study surveyed 90 patients entering treatment for alcohol problems and found that 54.4% at some time in their lives, had a life-changing spiritual or religious experience, compared to 39.1% in a large national survey. This study's sample also rated their spirituality higher than their religiousness, and higher than did the national sample. About a third, 32.2%, had no religious preference, compared to 13.8% in the national sample. Having had life-changing spiritual or religious experiences was associated with greater use of positive religious coping, some daily spiritual experiences, and higher self-ratings of one's self as spiritual and religious. Such experiences were not associated with patterns of alcohol use at treatment entry, demographic variables (sex, age, ethnicity, education, employment, or marital status), or AA involvement, including number of meetings attended in last year and in one's life-time. This study begins to elucidate the extent of spirituality and religiousness in those seeking treatment for alcohol problems and the role of life-changing spiritual and religious experiences in their recovery, which would appear to be more common than suggested by assumptions of spiritual alienation among alcoholics.