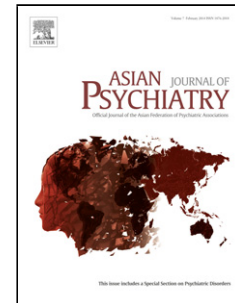


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## **Religiosity and religious delusions in schizophrenia – an observational study in a Hindu population**

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### **Highlights:**

- Role of religion in schizophrenia, specifically religious delusion and its impact on the presentation, course and outcome of schizophrenia has been explored.
- Findings support the possibility of private religious practices being more prominent in schizophrenia patients with religious delusion, and this group having a longer duration of untreated psychosis and more severe presentation in comparison to those with non-religious delusion.
- Further research into the role of religion in the phenomenology, presentation and outcome of religious delusions in schizophrenia would guide in development of more robust etiological models for this illness.

### **Introduction:**

Ken Wilber (2011) (Wilber, 2011) referred to the relationship between religion and science as a 'deadly dance' in today's world, with both fundamentally rejecting each other. Undoubtedly, the development of psychiatry as a scientific discipline, especially in the twentieth century (Zilboorg and Henry, 1941), has been doing justice to his statement. Despite of the fact that both disciplines share similar concepts like belief, guilt, suffering and healing with the philosophical underpinning of psyche being understood as 'soul' or 'mind' (Bettelheim, 1983), the relationship between the two have ranged from open hostility in past to tolerant indifference in modern times (Bhugra, 1997).

Sharing of psychological characteristics between religious experiences and psychotic symptoms as a similarity between the two has been suggested through ancient times (Simon, 1980), and also reflected in classification systems prior to DSM-IV (Larson et al., 1993). Studies have shown that delusion, a common presentation of psychosis, is affected significantly by sociocultural variables (Draguns, 1995; Ndeti and Vadher, 1985). Psychiatric textbooks (Gelder et al., 1996) have classified delusions in several ways like onset, fixity, theme etc., and delusions with religious theme offer a

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