

# SPIRITUALITY AND WELLBEING

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# SPIRITUALITY IN ADVANCED AGE

- Frailty and approaching death provoke questions about meaning and purpose (Kimble et al, 1995)
- Morgan (1995), states “a hunger exists (among older adults) for spirituality focused on meaning-making”(p.3)
- The subjective and informal spiritual journey through frailty and ultimately, death, for persons of advanced age is a neglected area of research and often a neglected aspect of palliative care.

# VALUE OF SPIRITUALITY IN LATER LIFE

- Spirituality can be of special value in dealing with the challenges of later life (e.g., Fry 2000; Ivtzan et al. 2013; Kirby et al. 2004).
- Research connects spirituality with positive late-life functioning (Wink and Dillon 2003).
- Spirituality has a general protective role against the impact of increasing frailty on wellbeing (Thauvoye et al. 2018)
- World Health Organization recognized the importance of spirituality for quality of life.

- The traditional–historical meaning defines a “spiritual person” as a deeply religious individual.
- 20–30 years the definition of spirituality became quite a broad.
- The religious seeker, the seeker of well-being and happiness, or the completely secular person (Koenig, 2008).
- ‘atheists and agnostics have spiritual needs that have no religious underpinnings’ (Sessanna et al., 2011).
- Little agreement today within the academic community upon a common definition for spirituality

# BROAD OR NARROW DEFINITION?

- Broad – (Forlenza & Vallada, 2018) advantage from the clinical perspective to use a broad concept of spirituality, since it also expands eligibility, i.e. every person is more or less spiritual – including atheists. Patients can define whatever spirituality means to them.
- Narrow - (Koenig, 2008) narrow definition would lead to the exclusion of those groups of people who still consider themselves spiritual but do not lead such spiritually dedicated lives.

# SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

- Defined as finding meaning and purpose (Brady et al., 1999)
- Spirituality Linked to numerous aspects of functioning, including health, psychopathology, substance use, sexual orientation, boredom proneness, anomalous temporal lobe signs, trait personality, empathy, altruism, and work and organizational values and behavior
- Spiritual wellbeing and prayer contribute to the prediction of psychological wellbeing, subjective wellbeing, physical symptoms and depression.
- Psychological well-being linked to successful ageing (Easterlin & Schaeffer, 1999)

# MEASURES?

- Spirituality “from a distance,” relying on surveys that contain global, distal measures
- Number of scales, indexes, and questionnaires have been developed to measure spiritual wellbeing in research
- *Specific to older adults:*
- Geriatric Spiritual Wellbeing (Dunn, 2008) spiritual well-being in older adults who may or may not have internalized religious beliefs.
- JAREL Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Hungelmann et al., 1996) "potential for enhanced spiritual wellbeing" or "spiritual distress." "p. 11
- The Older Adult Spirituality Scale (Eggers, 2003) - intrinsic religious aspect, optimism and satisfaction with life, connections, mood

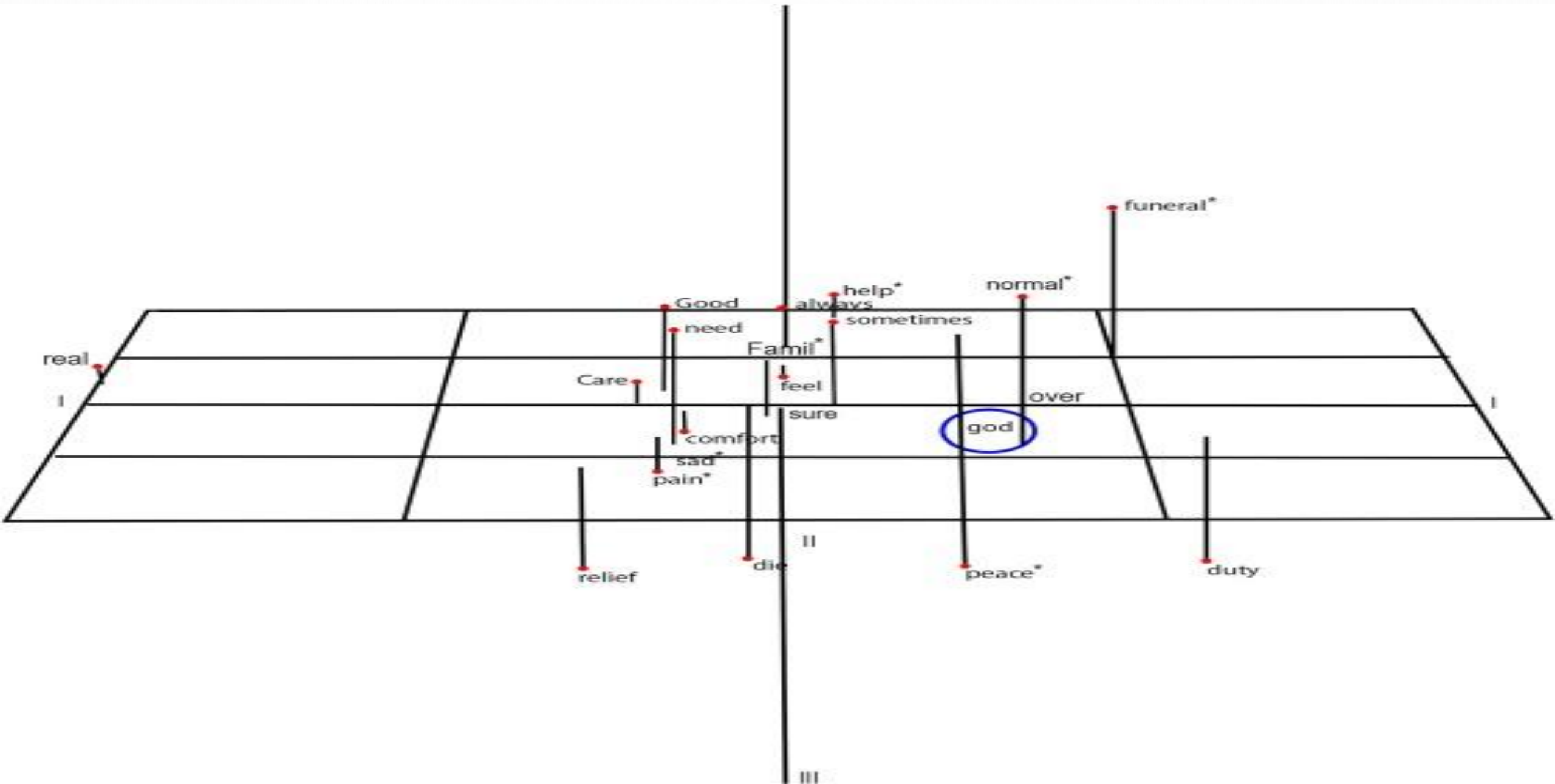
# VISUAL

Frey et al. (2018)

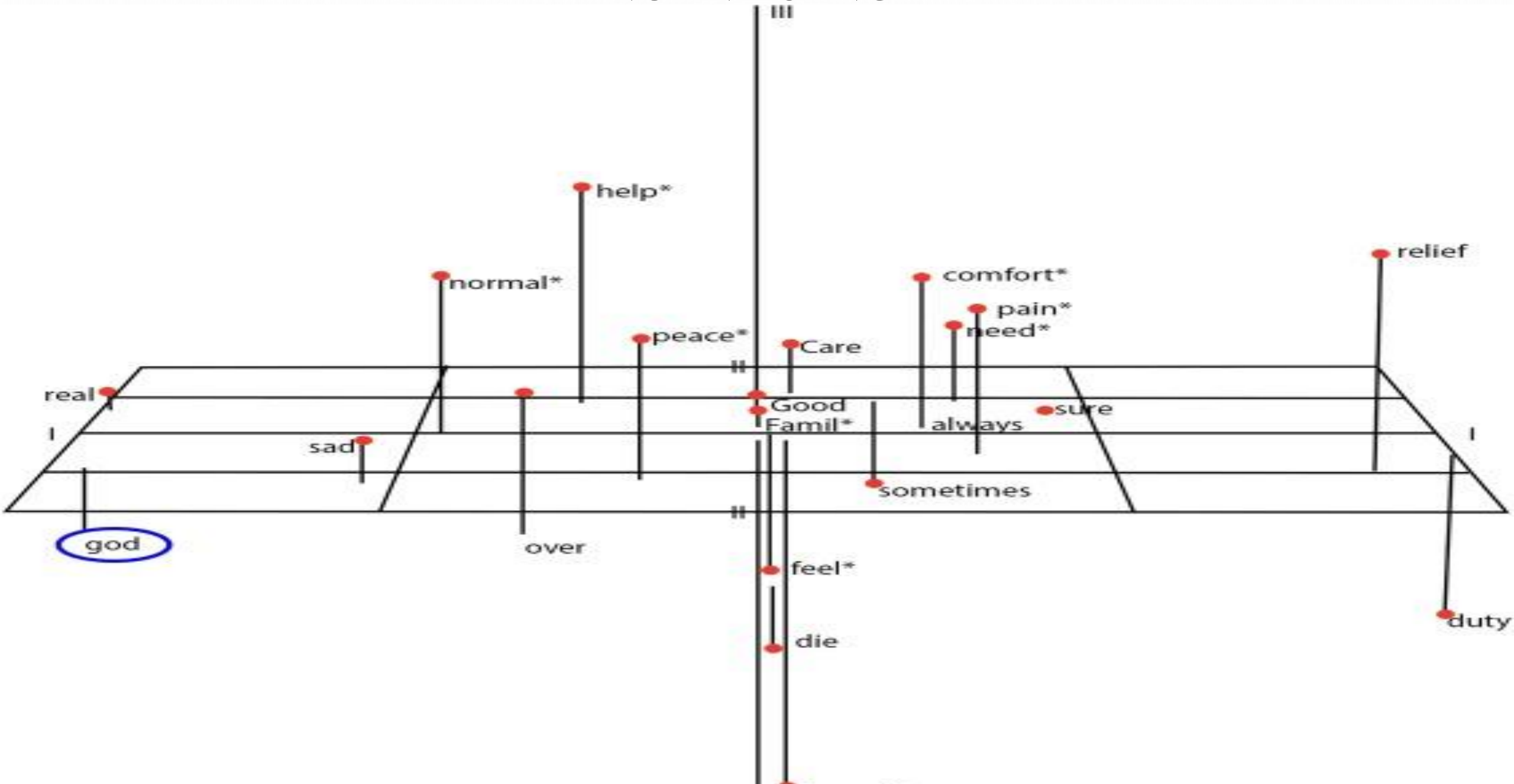
- Level of influence of religious/spiritual belief on attitudes toward death. Strong influence, minor influence, no influence (Frommelt, 2003)
- 113 staff member participants most involved in RAC resident's care in the 14 days prior to death.
- Multidimensional scaling (MDS) was used to determine if the patterns of belief influence–related linguistic behaviour (word-use frequencies and collocations in the transcripts) could be sorted into three distinct clusters that bear a resemblance to the religious/spiritual belief influence



# STRONG INFLUENCE



# NO INFLUENCE



# A CLOSER LOOK

- To develop a deeper understanding we need “to know spiritually oriented people; learning about their worldview, values, and relationships; participating in and observing their institutions and settings; and examining the specific resources and methods of spirituality in much greater detail”. (Pargament, 2007)
- Pujol et al (2018) used a visual text approach to explore with palliative care patients what their needs, and preferences are linked to spirituality – no given definition allows participants to construct their own linguistic expression of spirituality. They followed Pargament’s definition and theoretical framework and illustrated each by a series of pictures.

# SELF-DEFINITION

Spirituality as the search for significance in ways related to the sacred (Pargament):

Four pathways in the model:

- (a) Reading sacred texts;
- (b) Making an inner experience;
- (c) Being in relationships;
- (d) The practice of rituals.

One of these "paths" can be borrowed exclusively, but some people may use more than one.

# QUESTION

- How do frail older people (85+) experience and attribute meaning through spirituality at the end of life.
- At the applied level, greater understanding of the spiritual experiences and needs of the oldest old may assist older adults with progressing the development of advance care planning

# SAMPLE

A purposive sample recruited from a religiously based (<70bed) long-term care facility in the South Island.

Participants include 1) 10-12 cognitively intact residents 85+ (or 80+ if Māori) classified as 7 or above -“severely frail” (an end-of-life indicator) by clinical staff using the Clinical Frailty Scale.

# METHODOLOGY

- A methodological approach developed by Pujol et al (2018) using visual tools to capture rich descriptions using Pargament's definition of spirituality to underpin the research.
- In Part 1, semi-structured interviews of approximately one hour in length using pictures illustrating four pathways in "search for the sacred" allow for an exploration of resident perceptions and experiences of spirituality.











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is your choice  
involvement or non-  
involvement you

are you well-being and  
understanding  
and part of our  
experience and  
and  
are you one of our  
and have been  
involvement you  
are you one of our  
and have been  
involvement you

is it your choice to participate?  
• Yes, you do not have to participate  
• No, you do not have to participate

## PART 2

- (A few weeks apart) Participants asked to reflect on previous session and the pictures and then re-engage with the pictures in relation to Pargament's four themes of spirituality and sort them into the pile they think is best, explaining their thinking as they go: Practice of rituals/Reading sacred texts/Making an inner experience/Being in relationships
- Semi-structured interview into meaning and importance of spirituality and also religion (asked separately) and opinion on Pargament's definition of spirituality.
- Demographic information & wellness questionnaire (Spirituality Subscale WHO-QUAL)

# DATA ANALYSIS

- Early days: Data set includes visual and oral data as well as wellness measures. Analysis methodology includes multiple approaches, included multi-dimensional scaling of linguistic data, thematic analysis, strength of association between pictures and Pargament's framework.

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