

# CARExpert PROGRAMME

3rd August 2018

Amphitheatre Level 2,  
Duke-NUS Medical school

12.00 pm - 1.30 pm\*

\*Lunch will be provided at 11.30 am

## A Global Comparative Study of Religiosity and Health

Zachary Zimmer, PhD;

Canada Research Chair and Director  
Global Ageing and Community Initiative;  
Professor of Family Studies and  
Gerontology Mount Saint Vincent University,  
Halifax, Canada

### ABSTRACT

A longstanding history of research, dating back to some of the earliest empirical social science explorations has suggested that religion is consequential for health and on balance, salutary. Given the ubiquity of religion around the world and demographic changes around that are prompting global ageing, substantiation of this association across environments and perceptions of religiosity and spirituality is important. With this in mind, Dr. Zimmer has been leading a project entitled, "Linking spirituality and religiosity to life and health expectancy: A global comparative study," funded by the John Templeton Foundation, which has as one of its goals to answer the question: 'Regardless of nationality, culture, or religious denomination, do people with deeper religious and spiritual conviction live longer, healthier lives?'

This talk will focus on the results of one analysis conducted as part of the project. The analysis in question seeks to understand whether religion associates with health consistently across countries and religiosity indicators. It addresses two issues systematically overlooked in the large and historical body of research on religion and health. The first is the extent to which the association is globally contextual. The second is whether the association is consistent across indicators of religiosity. Data for the analysis are from 93 countries in the World Values Survey. Statistical analyses explore country-specific associations between religiosity indicators and self-assessed health and using a multilevel modeling approach, examine whether and how macro-level variables affect the association. The analysis will show that the association between religiosity and health is complex and is partly shaped by geopolitical and macro psychosocial contexts.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Zachary Zimmer is a Professor in the Department of Family Studies and Gerontology and Canada Research Chair in Global Aging and Community at Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada. He has held academic and research positions at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, the Population Council in New York, the University of Utah and the University of California San Francisco since 1998. Dr Zimmer uses quantitative data to focus on global issues studied from a demographic perspective that are related to population ageing. He has worked in many countries, including in East and Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and the United States of America. Dr Zimmer's work has been published in international journals across a number of disciplines and he has led seminars at universities, government agencies and research organisations around the world.



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