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The study found that the women whose text messages included a high percentage of words such as “pray,” “worship,” “faith,” “holy” and “God” had low levels of negative emotion and high levels of functional well-being. “From a psychological standpoint, there are a variety of reasons why cancer patients may benefit from prayer—whether on the Internet or elsewhere,” said Bret Shaw, lead author of the study.

“In reviewing the messages, some of the most common ways study participants used religion to cope with their illness included putting trust in God about the course of their illness and consequently feeling less stresses, believing in an afterlife and therefore being less afraid of death, finding blessings in their lives, and appraising their cancer experience in a more constructive religious light.”