

Survey finds many doctors religious

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A University of Chicago survey suggests 76 percent of physicians believe in God and 59 percent believe in some sort of afterlife.

The survey, published in the July 2005 issue of the Journal of General Internal Medicine, found that 90 percent of doctors in the United States attend religious services at least occasionally, compared to 81 percent of all adults. Fifty-five percent of doctors say their religious beliefs influence how they practice medicine.

The results ran contrary to what the researchers expected, the study authors said, because religious belief tends to decrease as education and income levels increase, and doctors are highly educated and usually highly paid. The authors also said studies conducted over the past 90 years have shown that only a minority of scientists believe in God or an afterlife.

"We did not think physicians were nearly this religious," said study author Farr Curlin. "We suspect that people who combine an aptitude for science with an interest in religion and an affinity for public service are particularly attracted to medicine."

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