

Lee M, Lim H, Xavier SM, Lee E-Y. "A divine infection": A rapid systematic review on the role of religious communities in the epidemiology of COVID-19. *J Relig Health*. Under review.

Abstract

Religion is a major factor that has contributed to the outbreak, spread, mitigation and adaptation of COVID-19. The objectives of this systematic review were to gather the epidemiological evidence on the outbreak and spread of COVID-19 based on religious practices, institutions, and activities and summarize the roles that religious beliefs and communities played in the transmission, mitigation, and/or adaptation of COVID-19. Seven databases were used for literature search and a total of 58 articles in English published between February 2020 and July 2020 were included. The findings of literature showed diverse influences of religion as a double-edged sword in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. Religious groups have either accelerated or mitigated the spread of COVID-19. A collaborative approach among religious communities, health science and government are critical to combat COVID-19 crisis.