

ADDICTION AND CONFLICT: DON'T CALL IT SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE, CALL IT PROGRESS

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Introduction

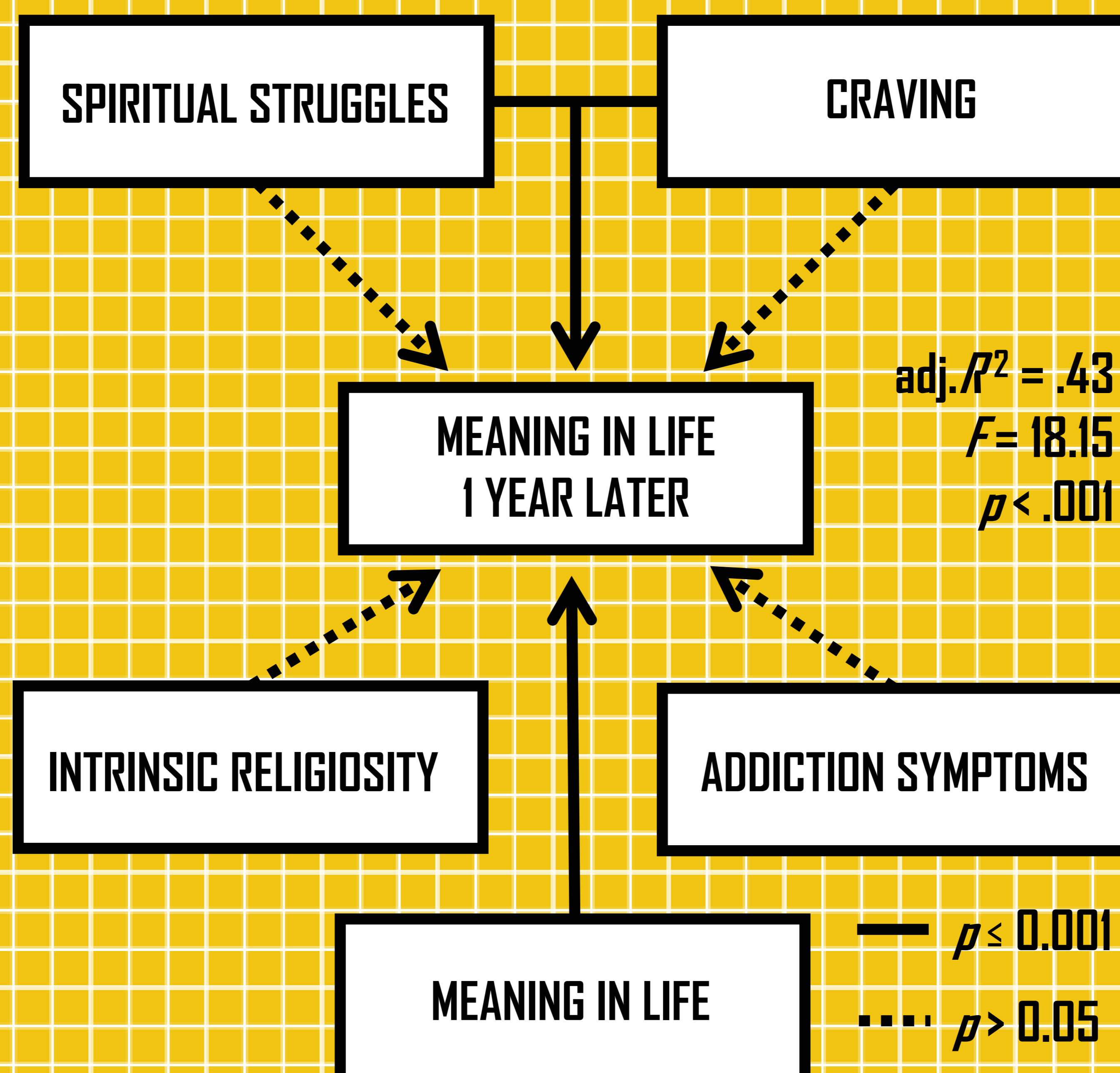
A conflict between an intrinsic religious orienting system and addictive behavior increases spiritual struggles. However, Pargament and Exline¹ argue that spiritual struggles, although undesirable, when accompanied by signs of disequilibrium, such as craving during the life event of treatment, create opportunities for growth in meaning in life. Yet, spiritual struggles were associated with higher craving and reduced abstaining confidence².

Aim

We tested whether more spiritual struggles with craving led to more meaning in life one year after addiction treatment.

Methods

Participants: 136 patients (75% Christians) in a clinical 12-week program based on CBT/Schema therapy with the option to relate one's belief to treatment goals, which replied baseline and one-year follow-up
Measures: Addiction³, Craving⁴, Meaning in Life⁵, Intrinsic Religiosity⁶ and Spiritual Struggles⁷



Results

Only baseline meaning in life (*Std. Beta* = .57; $p < .001$) and the interaction of more spiritual struggles and more craving (*Std. Beta* = .22; $p = .001$) predicted more meaning in life one year later.

Discussion

In line with the model¹, more spiritual struggles and craving, combined during clinical care, predicted more meaning in life one year later. It persisted even when controlling for baseline meaning in life and addiction symptoms. Even though spiritual struggles and craving are separately undesirable², the combination helped patients recover. The model suggests that it signaled the need for a reorientation for patients to recover, increasing patients' awareness of the need for change. Also, the Christian-sensitive program could have been a moderator.

References

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