



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Jim Gildea

meda.inquiries@sagepub.com

805-410-7335

**CARDIAC RISK ESTIMATES DIFFER FOR CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM PATIENTS
RESEARCH PUBLISHED IN *MEDICAL DECISION MAKING***

Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC (October 23, 2008) – In a study of medical students, more serious cardiac risk estimates were given to Christians and less serious estimates for Muslims despite the patients being otherwise identical in their characteristics and symptoms, according to research in an upcoming issue of [Medical Decision Making](#) published by SAGE. Risk assessment, the first step in a medical triage process, determines subsequent treatment.

In the study, led by Jamie Arndt, PhD, of the University of Missouri-Columbia, randomly chosen university medical students were asked to answer questions about their own mortality. Afterward, all the study participants inspected fictitious emergency room admittance forms for Muslim and Christian patients complaining of chest pain, and risk assessments were made for each patient. The participants who had been reminded of their personal mortality rendered more serious cardiac risk estimates for Christians and less serious estimates for Muslims despite the patients being otherwise identical in their characteristics and symptoms.

“We should emphasize that there is no reason to suspect intentional biased judgment on the part of medical students, since research indicates that most prejudicial responses occur without people’s intent or awareness,” write the authors in the article, noting that none of the study participants identified themselves as Muslim. “Still, psychological motivations provoked by concerns with one’s mortality can have far-reaching effects in a health care context. Further research is needed because it is vital that these effects be better understood.”

The *Medical Decision Making* article, “The Psychosocial Effect of Thoughts of Personal Mortality on Cardiac Risk Assessment,” written by Jamie Arndt, PhD, Matthew Vess, MA, Cathy R. Cox, MA, Jamie L. Goldenberg, PhD, and Stephen Lagle, BA, is free for a limited time at <http://mdm.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/0272989X08323300v1>.

###

Medical Decision Making (MDM), the official journal of the Society for Medical Decision Making, publishes articles designed to improve the health and clinical care of individuals and to assist with health policy development. Presenting theoretical, statistical, and modeling methods from a variety of disciplines, including decision psychology, health economics, clinical epidemiology, and evidence synthesis, the journal promotes understanding of human decision-making processes so that individuals can make more informed and satisfying choices regarding their health. <http://mdm.sagepub.com>

SAGE is a leading international publisher of journals, books, and electronic media for academic, educational, and professional markets. Since 1965, SAGE has helped inform and educate a global community of scholars, practitioners, researchers, and students spanning a wide range of subject areas including business, humanities, social sciences, and science, technology, and medicine. An independent company, SAGE has principal offices in Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC. www.sagepublications.com