

Chapter 14

Cultural and Spiritual Aspects of Patient Care

Chapter 14

Lesson 14.1

Learning Objectives

Theory

- 1) Describe how culture influences health and health care choices.
- 2) Discuss the ways in which poverty often impedes adequate health care within our country.

Learning Objectives

Clinical Practice

- 1) Discuss ways to protect patients' rights when their culture does not permit the use of a medical intervention.
- 2) Demonstrate cultural competence when caring for a culturally different patient.

Culture

- Culture: shared values, beliefs, and practices by the majority within a group
- Includes attitudes, roles, behaviors, and religious or spiritual practices
- Practices carried from generation to generation
- Immigration has brought great cultural diversity to the U.S. and Canada

Culture (cont'd)

- Culture influences lifestyle choices related to:
 - Nutrition
 - Exercise
 - Stress management
 - Smoking
 - Alcohol or drug use

Religion and Spirituality

- Religion and spirituality often used interchangeably but are different
- Religion: formalized system of belief and worship; its rituals related to health, illness, birth, death, and behavior are part of the organized religion
- Spirituality concerns the spirit or soul and is an element of religion

Major Religions in the U.S. and Canada

- Christianity—most people identify themselves as Christian
- Islam—second largest religious group
- Judaism—third largest religious group
- Eastern religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism (Daoism)

Christianity

- The largest religion in the world
 - Three main divisions: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and the Protestant faiths
- Believe in eternal life
- Death is viewed as a transition to a life with God
- A priest or a religious leader should be called if the patient desires a sacrament
- Prayer, reading of scripture and devotionals, and attendance at church services are the main religious activities of Protestant patients

Catholic Beliefs and Health Care

- Birth: infants must be baptized soon after birth.
- Holy Communion: patients receiving communion must not eat or drink anything 15 minutes before receiving the host
- Sacrament of the sick: administered by the priest to patients who are ill and conscious; may also be performed after death
- Death: the dying must receive the sacrament of the sick and make a confession; all body parts must be cremated or buried

Catholic Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Birth control: natural family planning is the only acceptable method of birth control. Nurses may teach family planning. Sterilization is forbidden unless for medical reasons
- Organ donation: donation and transplants are acceptable
- Religious articles: rosary beads, medals, and other objects such as statues of the saints should be kept visible and secure

Eastern Orthodox

- Birth: the baby must be baptized by 40 days after birth by a deacon or priest, who must baptize with holy water or by moving the baby in the air in the sign of the cross
- Holy Communion: the priest should be called if the patient wants to receive communion

Eastern Orthodox (cont'd)

- Sacrament of the sick: priest does this at bedside
- Diet: hospitalized patients excused from fasting from meat and dairy products on holy days
- Holidays: Christmas is celebrated on January 7 and New Year's Day on January 14
- Death: priest must be called while the patient is conscious for the patient to receive last rites. The Orthodox church discourages assisted deaths, autopsy, cremation, and organ donation

Protestant Beliefs Affecting Health Care

- Christian Science
 - Do not normally seek traditional health care
 - Believe that sickness, evil, and sin are not from God but of the mind. Illness and sin can be changed by altering the thoughts rather than by medical intervention
 - Do not take medications

Protestant Beliefs Affecting Health Care (cont'd)

- Jehovah's Witness

- Abortion is forbidden
- Taking blood into the body is prohibited
- Transfusion is not permitted
- Organ transplant may be accepted, but organ must be cleansed with non-blood solution before transplantation
- Only meat that is drained of blood may be eaten
- The body must be buried with all its parts, which prevents organ donation

Protestant Beliefs Affecting Health Care (cont'd)

- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
 - A church elder must be notified in the event of a death
 - Natural means of birth control are recommended
 - Cleanliness is of vital importance. A sacred undergarment may be worn that should be removed only in an emergency

Protestant Beliefs Affecting Health Care (cont'd)

- Seventh-Day Adventist
 - The Sabbath is observed on Saturday
 - Many are vegetarians
 - Most avoid eating pork

Protestant Beliefs Affecting Health Care (cont'd)

- Unitarian Universalist Association
 - Strong belief in woman's right of choice regarding abortion
 - Advocate donation of organs for transplant and research
- Mennonite
 - Women may wish to wear head covering while hospitalized

Islam

- One of the fastest growing religions in the world
- Emphasizes equality of the races and social classes and attempts to promote brotherhood for all
- Some women may not be allowed to make decisions about their health
- Sometimes the woman's husband or father must be present to give consent for treatment

Muslim Beliefs and Health Care

- Birth: After birth, the baby is bathed immediately and then given to the mother. Circumcision is performed before puberty. A baby born prematurely but at least 130 days' gestation is treated the same as a full-term infant.
- Diet: No pork or alcoholic beverages are allowed. All meat must be killed and blessed in a special way. Many may not eat traditional African-American foods such as cornbread or collard greens.

Muslim Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Death: Patients must face Mecca and confess sins and beg forgiveness of the family. If family is unavailable, any practicing Muslim can provide this support. After death the body must not be touched until the family has washed it, prepared it, and positioned it facing Mecca. Burial is performed as soon as possible. Cremation is forbidden. Autopsy is forbidden except for legal reasons. Organ donation is not permitted.

Muslim Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Birth control: Many believe that artificial birth control interferes with God's will. Others believe that the woman should have only as many children as the husband can afford, and contraception is permitted.
- Abortion: prohibited

Muslim Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Other practices: Washing is required at prayer time. Privacy must be provided for prayer. The Koran should not be touched by anyone ritually unclean, and nothing must be placed on top of it. Muslim women usually wear clothing that covers the entire body.

Judaism

- Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist
- Strict rules regarding hygiene, diet, sexual mores, and religious ceremony
- Food prepared according to Jewish dietary laws during slaughter, processing, and packaging and is then labeled “kosher”
- Important to consult with the patient to be sure that nursing care does not cause spiritual distress
- There are rituals regarding care of a dead body and burial, and a rabbi should be consulted

Jewish Beliefs and Health Care

- Birth: Babies are named by the father. Children are named 8 days after being born, when circumcision is performed. Female babies are named during the reading of the Torah.
- Care of women: The woman is thought to be unclean during her menses or after the birth of a child until she has bathed in a pool called a mikvah. The Orthodox Jewish man cannot help the woman with her care.

Jewish Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Diet: Kosher rules include no mixing of milk and meat and using separate utensils for milk and meat. Only animals slaughtered according to Jewish law may be eaten.
- Sabbath: From sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, Jews may not ride in cars; smoke; or use lights, money, or television. Surgery or medical treatments or care are avoided until a later time if possible.

Jewish Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Death: when there are no respirations and no circulation, and this cannot be corrected
 - Orthodox Jews forbid assisted death
 - Nurses must allow family to be with the patient when he or she dies and when the soul leaves the body. The body must be buried within 24 hours. The body may not be touched for 8 to 30 minutes and then only by an Orthodox person.
 - On the Sabbath, a body must not be handled
- All body parts removed during autopsy must be buried with the body

Jewish Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Birth control: birth control is discouraged and vasectomies are forbidden; abortion is allowed only to save the mother's life
- Organ transplant: may be allowed with a rabbi's approval
- Shaving: no blade must touch the skin; scissors or electric razor may be used

Jewish Beliefs and Health Care (cont'd)

- Hats: orthodox men may wear skull caps (yarmulkes) all the time and women cover their hair after marriage
- Prayer: Prayer to God is required. Nurses need to allow a quiet environment for prayer.

Reformed Judaism

- Birth: Orthodox practices may or may not be observed; circumcision may be practiced
- Care of women: beliefs do not follow the rules about touching women
- Diet: kosher diets are usually not observed
- Sabbath: there is worship in temples on Friday but no other rules
- Death: beliefs allow life support but no heroic measures; cremation is allowed

Reformed Judaism (cont'd)

- Organ transplant: allowed with the rabbi's approval
- Hats: praying is usually done without yarmulkes

Eastern Religions

- Hinduism
 - Many are vegetarians because most believe that eating meat involves harming a living creature
 - Illness or disease is seen as the result of the misuse of the body or a consequence of sin committed in a previous life
 - Eldest woman is considered the authority on health and healing matters
- Ayurvedic medicine follows principles of “hot” and “cold” to balance the diet as needed for the season and the disease state

Eastern Religions (cont'd)

- Buddhism
 - Do not believe in healing through faith
 - Believe spiritual peace and liberation from anxiety through following Buddha's teachings are important in promoting health and recovery
- Taoism
 - Believe that illness or disease is due to an imbalance in yin and yang

Transcultural Nursing

- Care that recognizes cultural diversity and is sensitive to the cultural needs of the patient and family
- Based on the fact that although there is diversity or differences among cultures, there are also universal patterns of behavior

Cultural Group Characteristics

- Characteristics that separate groups from one another are:
 - Nationality
 - Race
 - Color
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Religious affiliation

Major Cultural Groups in the U.S. and Canada

- European Americans
- American Indians
- African Americans
- Hispanic Americans
- Asian/Pacific Islander Americans
- Arab Americans

Developing Cultural Competence

- Nurses must develop cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity
- Cultural awareness
 - Know a people's history/ancestry and an appreciation for their artistic expressions, foods, and celebrations
- Cultural sensitivity
 - Refrain from using offensive language, respect patterns of communication, and refrain from speaking in ways that are disrespectful of a person's cultural beliefs
- Cultural competence
 - Know yourself; examine your own values, attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices

Poverty

- Subculture because of shared beliefs
- Day-to-day survival
- Family dynamics may be altered
- Malnutrition
- Poor health

Question 1

A Catholic woman has just delivered a stillborn baby. The mother requests that that infant be baptized. Which of the following statements is true regarding Catholic baptism?

- 1) Infants must be baptized soon after birth or stillborn delivery because of the belief that babies not baptized will not go to heaven.
- 2) Babies are baptized 8 days after being born.
- 3) The baby must be baptized within 40 days after birth.
- 4) Catholics do not perform baptism.

Chapter 14

Lesson 14.2

Learning Objectives

Theory

- 3) Compare ethnic differences of Hispanic Americans and Middle Eastern Muslims.
- 4) Incorporate major differences in dietary and nutritional choices among cultural and religious groups into patients' care plans.
- 5) Identify three beliefs or values affecting health care that might be found among patients from the following cultural groups: Hispanic American, Asian American, American Indian, African American, and European American.
- 6) Plan ways to support the spiritual needs of patients of various religions.
- 7) Describe how religious beliefs and practices may affect health and health care choices.

Learning Objectives

Clinical Practice

- 3) Discuss boundaries of professional care for a patient whose religious beliefs are different from yours.
- 4) Identify signs of spiritual distress in a patient and plan three interventions to relieve it.

Cultural and Ethnic Differences

- Communication
- View of time
- Organization of the family
- Nutrition
- Death and dying
- Health care beliefs
- Susceptibility to disease

Cultural Aspects to Consider: Communication

- An obvious cultural difference among people is language
- Nonverbal communication patterns differ among cultural groups
 - Personal space and eye contact
- Learning key phrases in other languages frequently encountered, or using translation lists of common questions or symptoms, is helpful
- Most health agencies have interpreters available

Common Values and Beliefs: View of Time

- Orientation to time varies from one culture to another, and attitudes about time can cause misunderstanding
- A second consideration of time is whether the culture is mostly concerned with the past, present, or future
- It is important to know the patient's view of time

Common Values and Beliefs: Organization of the Family

- Family households may be male-dominated, female-dominated, or share equality between men and women
- The position of the elderly varies considerably from one culture to another

Common Values and Beliefs: Nutrition

- Food has much symbolic and social meaning
- People learn from their family culture what foods are “good for you” or should be avoided or used for specific illnesses or diseases
- Foods are categorized in some cultures as “hot,” “cold,” or “cool,” based not on their temperature, but on their effect in the body

Common Values and Beliefs: Death and Dying

- Important to know rituals about death and bereavement so cultural taboos can be avoided
- Learn cultural views about autopsy before approaching a family on this issue
- There may be cultural rituals for preparing the body for burial
- Expressions of grief are also culturally based

Common Values and Beliefs: Health Care Beliefs

- Beliefs about health, disease, illness, and treatment are culturally based
- Religion is an integral part of culture and often plays very important part in patient's treatment
- All cultures have an element of folk or home remedy medicine that is handed down through families for treating common illnesses

Common Values and Beliefs: Asian/ Pacific Islander Americans

- Value self-control, age, authority, and harmony
- Maintain a holistic view of health and illness, in which nature is a dominant force
- Yin (negative, dark, cold, feminine)
- Yang (positive, light, warm, masculine)
- Acupressure, acupuncture, acumassage

Common Values and Beliefs: Asian/Pacific Islander Americans (cont'd)

- May believe that misdeeds lead to illness
- Consider it disrespectful to disagree with those in authority
- Reluctant to express emotions to others
- Tend to be stoic about pain
- May be overly agreeable to maintain harmony
- Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, and Christianity are the prominent faiths

Common Values and Beliefs: Hispanic Americans

- Family is valued over the individual
- Family system is patriarchal
- Health is seen as a gift from God
- Equilibrium achieved through prayer, religious objects, rituals, use of herbs and spices, and by treating others fairly and with respect
- Often seek help within the family first or may see a curandero

Common Values and Beliefs: Hispanic Americans (cont'd)

- May believe in the use of “hot” and “cold” foods to restore equilibrium
- May be superstitious (e.g., mal de ojo)
- May wear religious objects or bring them in from home
- It is acceptable to be vocal about illness or pain
- Touch is comforting and promotes rapport
- Health requires being in harmony with God

Common Values and Beliefs: African Americans

- Health and illness may be intertwined with religion and good and bad forces
- Families often multigenerational, and members of the church may be considered family
- Family is often matriarchal
- African Americans may believe that illness is preventable if they are attentive to their relationship with God and other people

Common Values and Beliefs: Susceptibility to Disease

- Certain diseases are passed from parent to child through the genes that determine a person's characteristics
- Be alert for signs of disorders that are common to a particular culture or race
- Learn about disorders that are predominant in a particular group

Common Values and Beliefs: Susceptibility to Disease (cont'd)

- African or Mediterranean ancestry
 - Sickle cell anemia
- Eastern European and Jewish ancestry
 - Tay-Sachs disease, lactase deficiency
- Hispanic, American Indian ancestry
 - Hypertension, diabetes

Culturally Sensitive Nursing Interventions

- Use an interpreter for history-taking or important teaching
- Use flash cards or a phrase book in the patient's language for common phrases
- Assist in designing a therapeutic diet with culturally preferred foods
- Involve the family in formulating treatment plans
- Advocate for the patient to choose or refuse treatment
- Provide quiet time for prayer or meditation

Question 2

Tamara's patient is Hispanic and barely speaks English. When caring for Hispanic patients it is important to remember that:

- 1) family systems are matriarchal (mother is the head of the family).
- 2) it is unacceptable to be vocal about pain.
- 3) touch on the arm, shoulder, or back is frightening and scares the Hispanic patient.
- 4) the spiritual dimension of life is important.

Question 3

Lisa has a 20-year-old male African-American patient. When caring for the African-American patient, it is important to remember that:

- 1) family structures are often patriarchal (father is the head of family).
- 2) members of the church are rarely considered family.
- 3) folk home remedies, faith healers, and professionals may be used for care.
- 4) Buddhism and Hinduism are the major religions.

Question 4

When considering a patient's cultural background it is important to:

- 1) generalize.
- 2) stereotype.
- 3) be biased.
- 4) remember the uniqueness of the patient.