

Treating Impoverished Populations

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Abstract

This paper will discuss what culture competence is, how to be unbiased when treating a patient, and what some biases might be and how to overcome them. A big part of being a nurse is being able to be adaptable not only to the many problems that people come in with, but the actual people coming in. This paper will also describe the importance in treating someone who is impoverished with adequate care.

Keywords: culture, cultural competence, treating the impoverished, population, nursing, quality care

Treating Impoverished Populations

Being a nurse is one of the most challenging occupations because of their ability to adapt. What comes into the hospital and what happens within the hospital can change drastically. This is not only for the sicknesses that come into the hospital, but as well as the individuals that come in as well. Individuals of different race, ethnicity, economic status, and different backgrounds get treated every day. Many vulnerable populations get targeted for less quality care than what they deserve. These vulnerable populations include the mentally ill, the impoverished, and the incarcerated. This requires nurses to be very open and accepting of all individuals, regardless of their background. This is especially important to treating patients in the United States because of how many multiethnic and multicultural groups that we have. Having this cultural competence is essential for a nurse to be able to provide care to the patient. For example, if an individual a nurse is treating is from a different culture and speaks a different language, it is the responsibility of the nurse to be able to translate the language for the patient, by using a translator and to learn about the patient's culture, so the nurse can better explain the best care for that patient.

Lucy Hood in Leddy and Pepper's Professional Nursing defines "cultural competence as a developmental process that builds continuous increases in knowledge and skill development in the areas of cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, interaction, and skills" (Hood, 2018, p. 281). This means not only knowing your patient's culture but also being sensitive to it and incorporating their preferences into their care if they would like in order to provide adequate care.

Cultural competence is important for a nurse to have especially, when treating the poor/impoverished population. In any minority or disadvantaged group, it is important to know the beliefs, biases, and judgements. This is important to know because it is the nurse's job to put

those attitudes and beliefs aside when treating the patient. This is especially important to realize because biases, judgements, and beliefs about an individual because of their background, race, or ethnicity are generally false. Many people, who do fall in these biases, judgements, and beliefs were taught wrongly, or had one bad experience with someone of the group and therefore, they label anybody a part of the group with this belief, bias, or judgement, even though it is not the case for everyone. In the poor/impoverished population, some of the biases and judgements toward them might be that they are more likely to treat themselves properly, or that there is no point in treating a patient because he will be back in after he gets released for the same problem, like an overdose. Regardless, of any of these biases or judgements that the nurse might have they need to treat every patient equally of status, race, ethnicity, or background because every patient deserves the same quality care. Doing this gives assurance to the patient that they are not being discriminated against and they are receiving the best medical care possible. It is crucial to provide the same care to him/her as you would someone who is in a higher economic class.

“If nurses feel they have knowledge about intercultural care and intercultural communication, they experience less stress which in turn leads to higher quality care” (Hemburg&Vilander, 2017, p. 823). Nurses simply provide better care when they know about their patient’s cultural background rather than just their past medical history. Nurses can gather cultural insight by doing a cultural assessment. During a cultural assessment, a nurse should include the following: the patient’s cultural background, health wellness beliefs and practices, family patterns, verbal and nonverbal communication, space orientation, death rituals, how they care for their ill family members, meaning of pain, and nutrition patterns. This is important because it gives the nurse a sense in what ways is there culture bettering or hurting their health. It helps the nurse identify causes of possible diseases, and how they should approach the patient.

For example, some cultures won't look you in the eye because they shouldn't have direct eye contact. For an ethnocentric nurse, this would be out of the ordinary and possibly considered rude. However, an open-minded, culturally competent nurse would take their background into consideration and accommodate their care accordingly. Another example is knowing the nutrition status of your patient like some religions don't eat pork which can affect how you might order food for that patient. Furthermore, in the example of caring for an impoverished population, they might not have access to healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables which can effect their health.

It is also important for nurses to communicate and collaborate within healthcare systems in order to plan and implement safe, effective, culturally competent care. In the case of providing for someone who is impoverished and may not have medical insurance, it is important to follow HIPPA's laws and only tell whatever staff member is on that case about their social economical status so that patient will not get judged or mistreated.

When it comes to providing the most adequate care for patients that have different backgrounds than your own, it is essential to remember to be culturally competent and professional when providing care. When treating impoverished communities, it is also important to be open-minded and aware of what medical problems they could have due to lack of resources while not hindering their dignity and always treating all patients with equal respect. All patients regardless of background or economic status should be provided quality care.

References

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