

The Muslim Culture

The Muslim religion, Islam, is next in line with Christianity and Judaism as the third-largest religion in the United States of America (World Population Review, 2021). Out of all 50 states, Illinois has the highest population of Muslims per 100,000 citizens, reigning at 2,800 (World Population Review, 2021). The Muslim faith is expanding rapidly, so it is essential to be culturally competent.

The Muslim faith is based around their god, Allah, and their Quran, or Holy Book. They have a specific set of beliefs and values. However, the religion is very diverse in terms of those who make it; various cultural groups consider themselves Islamic (Attum et al., 2018). Perhaps, one of the most well-known aspects of their religion is the month of Ramadan, which will be discussed in detail below. In regards to same-sex healthcare providers, Muslims do not approve of having a male-to-female provider-patient relationship (Attum et al., 2018). Gender concordance while providing care is an essential tip to know. Muslims are keen on maintaining privacy and modesty; same-sex providers are especially crucial when obstetric or gynecological care is given to female patients (Attum et al., 2018). If care can only be provided by males, ensuring another female presence is in the room is a must. Muslim women may portray modesty towards males by avoiding eye contact and not shaking their hands (Attum et al., 2018). Another tip to know would be that the left hand is viewed as unclean, so when administering medications or handing patients items, the right hand should be used (Attum et al., 2018). Muslims pray five times per day, all at certain intervals per day. Nurses must ensure they are aware of this, so the patient feels respected and supported (Attum et al., 2018). If capable, the patients should be pointed toward the holy city of Islam while they pray. The holy city is the Mecca Providence of

Saudi Arabia (Attum et al., 2018). Muslims believe pain and suffering are a testament to Allah and that experiencing such afflictions redeems them of their sins (Attum et al., 2018).

Outside of ensuring, if possible, a female provider is rendering care to the patient, there are few unique practices regarding the childbirth process. Many mothers may place kohl on their neonate's eyes after birth to prevent the cursed "evil eye." Kohl has lead and can be potentially harmful. Educating mothers on the risks of using kohl is imperative. The most prominent action to take place after the neonate is born is for him or her to hear a prayer spoken by his or her father (Lee, 2020). This prayer is supposed to be the first words the neonate hears outside of the womb. An important tip to note is that males must be circumcised on the seventh day of life (Lee, 2020). Abortion is forbidden in all cases except for rape, incest, and potential harm to the mother; 25 weeks gestation is considered human life (Attum et al., 2018). The husband is expected to be active in prenatal care, ensuring the mother receives adequate nutrition and medical oversight. There are no limitations on receiving blood products, medications, or procedures in the Muslim religion.

Family is a core aspect of the Muslim faith. The father of the family is considered the dominant one (Attum et al., 2018). Although, the family as a whole is the collective Muslim society. As previously mentioned, eye contact is avoided and is represented as respectful. Married females can speak for themselves, but this typically occurs in the absence of their husbands (Lee, 2020). Islamic elders are highly respected and are viewed as the building blocks of future Muslim generations. Families provide care for their elders by ensuring they are valued and loved, and they provide a place of residence for them.

Muslims cannot consume pork or alcohol; any medications made with pork or gelatin cannot be used either (Attum et al., 2018). Also, some patients will refuse hospital food

altogether; if this occurs, provide them with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Accommodations from their home made need to be arranged. There are no dietary ceremonies following childbirth. Ramadan, previously mentioned, is a sacred month consisting of fasting from food and fluids from sunrise to sunset. Ramadan is the holiest time of the year for Muslims, so it is essential to respect and provide concordant care. Fasting can be tricky if caring for patients with diabetes Mellitus. Educating patients on consuming pre-dawn and post-dusk food is imperative to preventing hypoglycemic complications (Attum et al., 2018). Pregnant women are exempt from fasting during Ramadan; however, they will make up the days after their pregnancy. While mothers are not permitted to fast, some still may want to. As nurses, an essential tip is to educate them on the importance of proper nutrition while remaining culturally accepting.

References

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