

N432 Clinical Cultural Report

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As a future nurse, I will take care of many patients from different backgrounds, religions, and cultures. Therefore, it is essential to have an awareness of each client's different beliefs and lifestyles. After researching more in-depth about people of the Jewish faith, I found that being open-minded, respectful, and asking about specific preferences can positively impact their healthcare experience.

Judaism is a religion in which the followers believe in one God, and the foundation of the faith is found in the Torah. The Torah contains commandments and instructions on how to live (Swihart et al., 2021). There are also many denominations and sects within Judaism, including Orthodox, Conservative or modern, and Reform Judaism. People who practice Orthodox Judaism are the strictest, follow all Torah commandments, and often pray at least three times a day. Conservative Jewish people tend to have a more modern outlook but try to follow traditions and pray daily. Reform Judaism is less strict, follows some religious practices but not all, and often self-interpret the Torah (Swihart et al., 2021). In 2004, an estimated 280,000 Jewish people lived in Illinois, and all but 20,000 lived in Chicago (Jewish Virtual Library, 2008). The Champaign-Urbana Jewish Federation was established in 1929 and is an excellent resource for anyone wanting to know more. They have a website with a lot of great information about education, humanitarian aid, where to find kosher meals, religious services, and community events.

Many people of the Jewish faith live in small communities with each other. They often will band together to help one another, especially in times of illness or paying for hospital care (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020). Men are typically seen as the head of the household for many Jewish families. It is not uncommon for a Rabbi, a spiritual leader, to be present in the healthcare setting. The Rabbi will often support modern medicine in conjunction with prayer.

Jewish people may require a Kosher diet. A Kosher diet involves the animal being killed in a way that is considered clean. They often do not eat pork, gelatin, or shellfish, and milk is not served with meat (Ricci et al., 2017). Some hospitals may offer a Kosher meal. If not, a vegetarian option can be considered. In Judaism, some sacred holidays such as Yom Kippur. Pregnant women are not required to fast, especially if it could harm their health. Treatments and procedures should not be conducted on the Sabbath, beginning eighteen minutes before sunset on Friday to forty-two minutes after the sun sets on Saturday (Ricci et al., 2017).

It is essential to recognize that every patient of the Jewish faith is different. Therefore, individual assessments must be completed to understand what the patient is comfortable with. There is a term "Shomer negiah," which means "observant of touch." Meaning there shouldn't be physical contact with the opposite sex except for the spouse and close family members (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020). Most Orthodox Jewish people prefer the same-sex provider; however, doctors are held in high regard; therefore, they might allow a male to care for them in a healthcare setting. (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020).

Women are considered unclean during their menstrual cycle and for seven days after menstruation ends. Once menstruation ends, the woman takes a ritual bath called mikveh, and she is considered clean again (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020). It is also vital that providers clarify and make sure that the woman doesn't have any medical questions. Some may have insufficient knowledge of accurate health and sexual education if it is not discussed at home. Contraception is typically only permitted if getting pregnant could harm the mother. Coitus interruptus, condoms, and vasectomies may also be forbidden (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020). Some Modern and Reform Jewish people may use birth control methods if they already have children of both

genders. Abortion is permitted in situations such a rape, severe abnormalities, or could threaten the mother's life.

During pregnancy, a woman is expected to eat a strict Kosher diet and keep the pregnancy a secret until after the first trimester. They typically try to avoid artificially inducing labor. In the past, many husbands were not allowed in the delivery room. However, a recent study showed that even in strict Orthodox communities, more Jewish fathers stay in the room and are present during childbirth (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020). This is important because I believe many people could interpret seeing the father waiting outside the room, not supporting their wife, as uncaring. However, that isn't the case. It is a normal part of their culture. It is also common for prayer to be said during and after delivery (Swihart et al., 2021). The nurse may also need to provide a safe means for the woman to participate in a washing ritual after delivery. Babies may or may not be named while in the hospital. Circumcisions might also be performed outside of the hospital setting. A mohel often comes to the home on the eighth day of birth to circumcise the infant as this is a strict contract with God for Jewish people (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020). If death should occur, family, friends, or spiritual leaders will remain with the body. This is called Shemira. Shemira is not observed for infants that die within thirty days of being born (Wehbe-Alamah et al., 2020).

Caring for people of a different culture might feel challenging in the beginning. The most important thing to remember is to be respectful and ask the patient about their preferences. Often, they are grateful that someone cares enough to ask and are happy to give insight into their religion or culture.

References

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