

N432 Clinical Cultural Report

The cultural group I chose was Orthodox Jews. Today there are about 14 million Jews worldwide, most of them live in the United States and Israel. Someone is commonly only considered Jewish if their mother is Jewish.

The religious belief of this group is Judaism. Judaism is the world's oldest monotheistic religion. The idea is that there's only one God who has an established a covenant, or special agreement, with them. Their God communicated to believers through prophets and rewarded good deeds while punishing evil (History.com Editors, 2021). In Judaism, most believers believe their Messiah hasn't come yet. Messiah is the promised deliverer of the Jewish nation in the Hebrew Bible. Jewish people worship in holy places called synagogues and honor the sacred text called the Tanakh or "Hebrew Bible," which includes books of the Old Testament in the Christian Bible, but in a different order. Their spiritual leaders are called rabbis, and the six-pointed Star of David symbolizes Judaism (History.com Editors, 2021).

Judaism has several beliefs that must be considered when caring for them in the healthcare setting. A patient who is dying may wish to recite the "Shema," which is a Hebrew declaration of belief in God, and they also may want to make a death-bed confession known as "Vidui." Jewish law prohibits any active intervention that would hasten the death of a terminal ill patient. Lastly, Jewish law has strict rules about modesty. A Jewish patient, mainly if they are observant, should, whenever possible, not be put in a mixed-sex ward. When caring for patients of the Judaism religion it is important to talk about meals and ideal food preference, using same sex nurse as the patient, and respecting religious rituals and preferences between treatment or meals.

In Jewish law, all forms of required medical treatment are encouraged as the guiding principle is that medical and health care is that the saving of life is paramount. All medicines, including blood transfusions or non-Kosher products such as insulin derived from animal sources, are allowed (*Caring For A Jewish Patient - A Guide For Medical Professionals*, n.d.). If a patient's condition is life-threatening and they don't have enough time to ask a Rabbi for advice, all medical treatment designed to avert the threat to life should be carried out. A person who is not seriously ill should not be given non-Kosher food and may prefer not to undergo medical treatment on the Sabbath or significant Festivals. When it comes to childbirth, once the childbirth process has started, the obligation to fast on Yom Kippur and other fasts is suspended for seven days (*Caring For A Jewish Patient - A Guide For Medical Professionals*, n.d.). Between 7 and 30 days after the birth, the mother should fast on Yom Kippur; unless the doctor claims it inadvisable, the mother must consult a Rabbi. The newborn is considered its own independent person once the head has emerged from the birth canal. The circumcision marks the entry of Jewish males in the Covenant between God and the Jewish people. The circumcision is performed by a person called a "Mohel," and it is customary to have ten men present and a small celebration afterward (*Caring For A Jewish Patient - A Guide For Medical Professionals*, n.d.).

Standard Jewish family structure varies between the families in the United States and the families in Middle East-North Africa. Jews in the Middle East- North Africa region live in bigger households than the U.S. and average 4.3 people (*Religion*, 2019). Jews are likely to live as couples in the U.S. than in Israel. Jews differ from most religions because the most common household is a two-parent family household with minor children or just couple-only households. Jews have a smaller share than others living with extended families. Around 29% of Israeli Jews live with extended family, only 6% of U.S. Jews do (*Religion*, 2019). Elders are viewed as an

essential part of society. Jews perceive old age as a blessing and should not be perceived as a burden. Jews believe the elderly should be held in the highest esteem for having earned the elderly gift, and the people should understand what we can learn from the actions which led them to receive this blessing (Fischer, 2020).

In Jewish culture, the communication is in a direct manner and uses a communication style known as “dugruit,” which refers to a forthright and unapologetic directness in communication (*Israeli Culture - Communication*, n.d.). Jews tend to use many hand gestures and tend to speak loudly and fast. People tend to overlap their speaking to clear up and finish one’s point, so interruptions are common during a conversation. Jewish people tend to touch or tap the person whom they are talking to. Shoulder touching between men is common and symbolizes a sign of friendship and affection. Physical contact with the opposite gender is usually avoided. Conversations are generally an arm’s distance and can be considered rude if someone speaks and you start to back away. When it comes to men and women talking, they tend to stand further apart (*Israeli Culture - Communication*, n.d.). Eye contact is expected and shows a sense of interest and respect in the people. Religiously observant women will tend to gaze when speaking with the opposite gender. Gestures are ubiquitous and are used to emphasize or express a particular point (*Israeli Culture - Communication*, n.d.).

The Jewish person follows the Kosher law to define which foods a person can and cannot eat. The law is divided into three categories meat, everything made from meat and poultry, dairy, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, and pareve, any foods that neither meat nor dairy, including fish, eggs, and plant-based foods (Eagle, 2020). A person should never eat meat and dairy together; most people will use different utensils for each and wash the utensils in other water to prevent cross-contamination. Meat and dairy cannot be eaten in the same meal together, but pareve foods

are considered neutral, so they can be eaten with either meat or dairy (Eagle, 2020). Foods that symbolize birth, fertility, and childhood include fish, baked goods shaped like fish, pomegranates, and foods shaped like stars, all of which symbolize fertility and abundance (Eagle, 2020). Often, milk, dairy products, honey, and almonds are eaten to represent the childhood, development, and growth that you wish for your baby (Eagle, 2020). Lastly, circular-shaped foods such as bagels, chickpeas, and hard-boiled eggs symbolize birth and are served to represent the baby's longing for shelter inside the mother's womb (Eagle, 2020).

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