

N432 Culture Report

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The Jewish are the ancestors of Jacob and were previously called Hebrews (Weiner, 2022). There are 14.7 million Jewish people globally, with a majority occupying Israel and the United States (Weiner, 2022). Currently, there are 280,000 living in Illinois, with all but 20,000 residing in and around Chicago (Jewish Virtual Library, 2022). In the mid-1990s, 1,500 Jews lived in Champaign, 1,060 in Springfield, 1,000 in Peoria, 230 in Bloomington, and 100 in Danville (Jewish Virtual Library, 2022). The Jewish people practice Judaism, but there are several variations of Judaism. This paper will discuss orthodox Judaism.

Orthodox Jews believe in one God, with which they share a special agreement (History.com Editors, 2021). They worship God in synagogues, and their spiritual leaders are called Rabbis (History.com Editors, 2021). These individuals live their lives according to laws outlined in their Torah, God's commandments, and the belief that good deeds result in rewards while evil deeds result in punishment (History.com Editors, 2021). One of those laws is to observe the Sabbath, a day of rest, which begins 18 minutes before sunset on Friday and ends 42 minutes after sunset on Saturday (Ricci et al., 2021). They do not drive, use electronics, or write during this time, meaning they cannot consent to medical procedures unless they sustain their lives (Lutwak et al., 2022; Ricci et al., 2021).

Jewish law also affects reproduction. According to Lutwak et al. (2022), Orthodox women must refrain from physical contact with their husbands for at least five days during their menstrual cycle and seven days following. This practice is essential for healthcare providers to consider because it could prevent sexual intercourse during the woman's fertile window, falsely indicating a fertility issue. Orthodox women must practice modesty which includes wearing clothing covering their elbows and knees and requesting a female provider (*Jewish Americans*, 2019). However, if their lives are in danger or one is not available, they are permitted to see a

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male provider (*Jewish Americans*, 2019). Orthodox men must “be fruitful and multiply,” requiring them to have a minimum of two children, one boy, and one girl. However, most continue having children until they can no longer do so (Dubov, 2019).

According to Resnick (2020), the Jewish believe pain has a purpose, to help them grow, strengthen their values, redefine their lives, and bring them closer to God. Suffering results from not identifying the purpose of the pain. Jewish embrace painful situations that benefit them, such as a mother enduring labor pains because it results in a child. They are vocal about their pain because they want to communicate it to their family and provider. Orthodox Jews must receive medical treatment for physical pain and illness because God owns everything, including their bodies. They must take care of their bodies until they are given back to God after death.

Jewish law impacts the labor and the postpartum process. According to Lutwak et al. (2022), the father is present during labor but will not touch the mother or view the birth because she is bleeding from her uterus. The woman often has a support person, family, or a friend present that provides physical comfort, such as holding her hand, rubbing her back, and applying sacral counterpressure. The husband offers spiritual support by praying at her bedside. Following the birth, the father may choose not to cut the umbilical cord, requiring the support person or medical staff to cut it. The mother performs no specific dietary rituals. Jewish couples name their daughters at the synagogue on the first Saturday after birth. Jewish boys are circumcised and given their Hebrew name on their eighth day of life.

According to BBC (2022), in a traditional Orthodox family, the mother and father have equal status but different roles. Women are responsible for maintaining the home, raising the children, and caring for their husbands, while the husband works outside the home and makes major decisions. Together, they teach their children about their beliefs and

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traditions. One of those beliefs is to honor and respect thy father and mother, including caring for them in old age. The Jewish are close-knit and child-oriented (*Jewish Americans*, 2019). They believe that the entire family suffers when one family member is sick, resulting in someone staying with the ill person until they either recover or pass (*Jewish Americans*, 2019). Nurses should not ask a Jewish family member to leave the bedside unless necessary for the patient's health.

The Jewish have specific communication and dietary practices. For example, they must not shake hands with a member of the opposite gender or have their personal space invaded by them (*Jewish Americans*, 2019). They may speak with a member of the opposite gender but cannot be alone with them behind locked doors (*Jewish Americans*, 2019). Orthodox Jews abide by kosher diet laws, including not consuming raw meat, pork, or shellfish, not mixing meat and dairy products, and not using plates or utensils that have touched non-kosher foods (Ricci et al., 2021). During hospitalization, it is crucial to help the patient maintain their regular diet by requesting disposable dishes and having kosher meals brought in by nearby food services or their family (Lutwak et al., 2022).

When caring for a Jewish woman on the labor and delivery unit, the nurse can practice culturally competent care by providing an extra hospital gown and draping the perineal area to ensure modesty. The nurse can help the father participate in the labor by urging him to maintain eye contact with his wife and provide verbal encouragement. The nurse can also provide physical comfort to the mother if a female friend or relative is not present. The nurse should check on the patient frequently during the Sabbath because she cannot use the call light (Ricci et al., 2021). The nurse should coordinate discharge around the Sabbath because the patient cannot drive

during this time (Ricci et al., 2021). If caring for a Jewish male, the nurse should discuss having a male nurse replace her and avoid unnecessarily touching the patient or invading their space.

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