

The Jehovah's Witness religion is a Christian denomination with millions of members in more than 200 countries worldwide (Faith, 2019). Here in Illinois, Jehovah's witnesses comprise about 1% of the Christian religious population (Faith, 2019). Jehovah's Witnesses are unique among the Christian groups in their teaching that Jesus is the son of God but not part of the Holy Trinity (Faith, 2019). According to their beliefs derived from the Bible, blood transfusions can often be seen as against God's will making medical treatment difficult in certain situations. Jehovah's witnesses may even face ostracization and expulsion from their religious communities if they agree to a blood transfusion (Faith, 2019). While this may be true for some Jehovah's witnesses, a minority of the population will accept a blood transfusion or will at least accept a blood transfusion using their pre-supplied blood.

Pain and suffering in the Jehovah's witness religion are viewed as a by-product of sin, so that members may refuse mind-altering substances for pain treatment, such as opioids (Faith, 2019). Jehovah's witnesses believe that maintaining a happy family pleases God, so the family unit is critical and typically consists of gender roles in the average nuclear family dynamic (Faith, 2019). This includes a mother raising the children and a father supporting the family's needs. In this religion, communication is also seen as a unique tool for spreading the word of God, so they are very social, often going door to door to spread this message. Along with not accepting a blood transfusion, some members even believe eating blood, or blood-containing products is forbidden, leading to some members being vegetarians (Capriotti, 2020).

These core values may affect the health and childbearing process because, frequently, much blood is lost during labor and delivery. Even if a woman donates her

blood, these stores can easily be used up, so having a plan and informing the patient of different options is vital. A vegetarian diet is also not recommended for pregnancy, so meeting with a dietician to find solutions for the patient would be helpful.

When treating Jehovah's witnesses, it is best not to assume all of them carry the same beliefs, so be sure to ask specific questions regarding their views. If a blood transfusion may be needed, it is also recommended to take the Jehovah's Witness member's blood prior, in case it may be needed for a surgical procedure. This depends on the member's views because some will not even take their own blood for a transfusion. Ask the individual if they would like to receive a blood transfusion alone, away from family, so they will not be ostracized into declining when they want the transfusion (Capriotti, 2020).

References

Capriotti, T. (2020). *Davis Advantage for pathophysiology: Introductory concepts and clinical perspectives*. F.A. Davis.

Faith, C. (2019, April 3). *US states by Jehovah's Witness Population*. WorldAtlas.

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