Culture Report: Nigeria

Noredia Asia

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Nigeria, Africa's most populated country, is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups that declared independence from the United Kingdom on the 1st of October in 1960. 14% of the United States population comprises immigrants, and 0.3% reside in the Champaign-Urbana area (Biggest Sources of Immigrants to Champaign, 2022).

In Nigeria, about half the population is Muslim, 40-45% is Christian, and 5-10% practice indigenous religious traditions (Nigeria, n.d.). Muslims in certain cultures use folk remedies rooted in passages of the Quran, including aloe, dill, and fenugreek (Attum et al., 2022). Healthcare providers must question these patients about herbal supplements and utilize reconciliation to find contraindications when taken with prescribed modern medications.

In Nigerian culture, labor pain is often seen as fruitful and purposeful, which often causes mothers to endure the labor process without any analgesia (Akadri & Odelola, 2018). This pain rewards the postpartum phase as a remarkable moment in a new mother's life. Depending on who is available, the mother is cared for by her mother, mother-in-law, or another female relative. The baby's first bath represents the child's ability to rely on the community. After, the mother lavishes with abdominal massages using hot water and a cloth (Baby Birth Traditions - Nigeria, 2022).

Nigerians view family as a priority over everything else. Extended families provide social position and recognition, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, and in-laws, all working together as a family throughout their lives. Hierarchy and seniority govern family interactions. Similarly, the activities of a family's members impact its honor. Individuals seek financial assistance and counseling from members of their extended family, and the family is supposed to provide for the well-being of all members (Resource Guides: Cultural Approaches to Pediatric Palliative Care in Central Massachusetts: Nigerian, n.d.). Although the function of the extended family is shrinking in metropolitan areas, there is still a strong history of mutual caring and duty among the members.

Although a male-dominated country, women's rights are evolving, allowing their voices and presence to be heard and acknowledged. Handshakes and bows are standard greetings in the presence of elders. Hugs are becoming popular among Nigerian Americans. Direct eye contact, particularly with adults, is considered impolite (Resource Guides: Cultural Approaches to Pediatric Palliative Care in Central Massachusetts: Nigerian, n.d.). The standard of younger adults is to start communication with the elderly with a friendly, soft-spoken, upbeat, and non-confrontational tone. Silence often occurs to avoid conflict or to convey dissatisfaction. Nigerians, for the most part, are quiet and stoic.

Food is fundamental to Nigerians as an essential factor in the healing process, so meeting the daily nutrient requirements can breed a healthy and productive life (Nigeria: Culture, Facts & Travel, 2022). After childbirth, Northern Nigerians tend to give 'Kanu,' a drink, to the mother to increase her breastmilk supply (Obidike, 2021). During hospitalization, the spice level in most Nigerian food could interfere with medications and proper healing (Obidike, 2021).

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