

A Clinical Cultural Report on the Chinese Culture

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Description of the Chinese Culture

Chinese culture is among the world's oldest (Stunning Tours, 2019). Over nine million Chinese people live in the Americas (Textor, 2022). According to a 2023 article, there are an estimated 150,600 Asians of Chinese descent living in Illinois (Emery, 2023). According to zipatlas.com (2023), the cities in Illinois that boast a significant number of Chinese people include the cities of Urbana and Champaign. Urbana ranks third overall with 9.14%, and Champaign at the tenth spot with 5.95% (zipatlas.com, 2023). Most of these populations are graduate students at the University of Illinois (Emery, 2023).

Religion

The Chinese Communist Party, the ruling party in China, is officially atheist (Albert & Maizland, 2020). However, it only recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Catholicism, Daoism, Islam, and Protestantism (Albert & Maizland, 2020). The practice of any other faith is formally prohibited, although they often tolerate traditional Chinese beliefs (Albert & Maizland, 2020).

Some Chinese may attribute illness to disharmony of the body elements, moral retribution by ancestors or deities for misdeeds or negligence, or cosmic disharmony, as may occur if a person's combination of year of birth, month of birth, day of birth, and time of birth clash with those of someone in their family, interference from evil forces such as malevolent ghosts and spirits, or impersonal evil forces, or poor Feng Shui (the impact of the natural and built environment on the fortune and wellbeing of inhabitants) (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Most Chinese women prefer providers of the same sex (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Healing Beliefs and Practices

The Chinese people believe that food, illness, and medications are usually classified as 'hot' or 'cold' according to the perceived effects on the body (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland,

2009). They believe that health is a balance of positive (yang) and negative (yin) energy in the body (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Chi refers to the life force or energy in the body (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Many people will use traditional Chinese medical treatments, including acupuncture, acupressure, and Chinese herbs (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). They also use dietary therapy and supernatural healing (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Modern versions of traditional medicines are available through Chinese grocery stores (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Family Life

The Chinese people are known for their robust family system. The Chinese family has a well-defined role for different family members (Song, 2023). Elders are to be respected and followed unquestioningly, as they are sources of wisdom and spirituality (Song, 2023). To the extent that questioning their authority is considered offensive (Song, 2023). The parents, who are working-age adults, are considered providers for both their parents and children (Song, 2023). Children have no authority over their lives, and decisions are always made for them (Song, 2023). Children are trained and prepared to serve their elders (Song, 2023). A Chinese family is considered being patriarchal and patrilineal (Song, 2023). It means that the male elders dominate the decision-making of the whole family. Women adopt their husband's family or last names and assume the role of child bearers, homemakers, and workers (Song, 2023).

One of the beautiful aspects of Chinese culture is that despite being very strong in its beliefs, values, and traditions, it has accepted modern influences and inculcated them into its culture without losing traditions completely (Song, 2023). The traditional roles and ways are still respected and given importance, but the modern family is more open and welcoming towards the needs of the modern era (Song, 2023).

Communication

Social roles may influence interactions because of the potential for 'loss of face'. Loss of face brings shame to the whole family (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Chinese people may not talk about their problems, especially psychosocial ones, because they may assume that Westerners will not understand their culture or experiences (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). They also avoid saying no because they consider it impolite (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Open discussion about sexuality is considered taboo (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). The cultural norms of the Chinese people are avoiding eye contact, shyness, and passivity (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Diet

Chinese people believe that pregnancy and childbirth disturb the balance of hot and cold required for good health (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Because of this, various dietary and behavioral practices are customary to keep the mother and baby physically healthy, including eating special soups and chicken broth, not eating lamb because of the belief that it may cause the baby to have epilepsy, and not eating pineapple because it can cause miscarriage (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Postpartum women may not eat with other family members for up to one month due to the belief that lochia discharge is pollution (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). For the same reason, postpartum women may abstain from sexual relations (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Description of Core Values

Pregnant Chinese women prefer doctors of the same sex (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). When they are ill or pregnant, many Chinese people assume a 'sick role' in which they depend heavily on others for assistance. This attitude means some healthcare providers may be

seen as uncaring because they encourage independence rather than catering directly to the client's wishes (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Birth

Many Chinese people believe women should not cry out or scream during labor (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Women may experience distress if not given a choice between cultural traditions and Western practices (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Women may prefer sitting or squatting to give birth (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Ideally, the laboring woman's mother or mother-in-law attends childbirth rather than the child's father (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

After Birth

Some women may observe a period of confinement after birth, during which they rest, dress warmly, limit showers, and eat only hot foods (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). These ideas conflict with the modern nursing practice of early ambulation and showering after birth (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Infant Care

Older female relatives expect younger women to follow certain traditional practices they advocate (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Nowadays, Chinese women practice a combination of modern Western culture and traditional Chinese culture approach to child-rearing. Many Chinese people believe that infants should not be dressed in used clothing as the baby may take on the characteristics of those who wore the clothes previously (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Therefore, the family may bring new clothing for the baby instead of dressing the baby in hospital clothing (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Infants may be separated from their mothers for at least the first 24 hours to allow the postpartum woman to rest (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). This practice conflicts with the Baby-Friendly USA's recommendation of

keeping the baby in the mother's room as much as possible during the hospital stay (Wright, 2022). If someone praises a newborn, the mother believes that evil spirits will take the infant away or the child will fall ill (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Paternal grandmothers are often very involved with the new infant while the mother is recovering (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Infant Feeding

Contrary to the scientific belief about colostrum, Chinese people believe that colostrum may be considered stale or dirty breastmilk and should be discarded (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009). Chinese people believe boiled rice water or baby formula are better substitutes during the first two days (Queensland Health, The State of Queensland, 2009).

Tips, Suggestions, and Interventions in Caring for Chinese People

Communication

Therapeutic communication is a must in the nursing profession. Therapeutic communication involves not only using verbal but also non-verbal skills. Nursing students should expect Chinese people to avoid eye contact when authority or healthcare providers talk to them, and this is not a sign of rudeness or disrespect. Chinese people also believe that saying "no" is a sign of disrespect, so avoid closed-ended questions. Instead, ask open-ended questions to encourage a more open conversation. Since Chinese people believe praising a newborn child will make the newborn ill, avoid or minimize giving compliments to the newborn.

Postpartum Care

Chinese women will prefer women providers as much as possible, so be respectful and ask permission if a male healthcare provider can care for the client. The confinement to rest, dress warmly, limit showers, and eat only hot food are beliefs of the elders for postpartum mothers. These beliefs conflict with modern medicine and evidence-based practice of early ambulation and taking showers

after giving birth. As nurses, we advocate for our clients, so be aware and respectful of the client's choices but reiterate the significance of early ambulation and taking showers after birth.

Infant Care Practices

Chinese people believe that colostrum is considered stale and dirty breastmilk and discarded. As nurses, client education is a very significant part of the profession. Scientific proofs in modern medicine greatly encourage newborn infants to consume the colostrum that nursing mothers produce. Colostrum is easy to digest, as it is high in protein and low in sugar and fat (Ricci et al., 2020). It is a complete nutrition and all the newborn needs for the first two to four days of life (Ricci et al., 2020). They also believe that putting hand-me-down clothing on a newborn will make the newborn acquire the qualities of the previous owner. Respectfully ask the mother if they brought new clothing for the newborn to wear before birthing. Another client education is about bonding time. Baby-Friendly USA, an organization that sets baby health and wellness guidelines, suggests keeping the baby in the mother's room as much as possible during the entire hospital stay (Wright, 2022). According to them, rooming in helps optimize the opportunity for both parents to get to know their baby during the precious first days (Wright, 2022). It enhances bonding and allows the mother to learn about her baby's feeding cues under the expert guidance of trained staff (Wright, 2022).

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