

America is commonly known as the melting pot of the world. The reason why, is because the country is comprised of many different cultures, ethnicities, and religions that are able to work and coincide together. These differences in culture are also what makes America unique. We are able to learn from each other and implement things that we like in our own day-to-day activities. But, along with that, differences in culture also mean differences in how the people of these cultures like and are used to being taken care of. People grow up with different ways of being cared for and it is our job as medical professionals to understand these differences and conform to help facilitate healing. I believe that comfortability is important when it comes to increasing patients' health. This paper will discuss the German culture including religion, family life, preferred styles of communication, and diet as well as show the impact this holds on healthcare preferences. This is necessary due to the prevalence of Germans in the Danville/Champaign area. In the Danville area, which includes Champaign County, there is a prevalence rate of about 11% of German Americans in the area (Statistical Atlas, 2023).

In terms of food, the German culture is known for eating hearty and heavy meals. These meals are normally packed with protein because there are generous portions of meat in every dish (Huang, 2023). Besides the normal recommendations for food that we have in America, there aren't any differences that I could find in what is eaten during and after pregnancy. Based on this, there wouldn't be any culturally specific diet requirements that would vary enough to impact hospitalization if a person of German culture were to have a child.

The communication style within the German culture can be boiled down into one word, direct (Magee, 2021). Even though some people may view this as an insensitive way of communication, the German culture views this as respectful (Magee, 2021). This is because their type of communication promotes honesty and transparency (Magee, 2021). During my research,

I was unable to find anything regarding whether or not females are allowed to speak to strangers, but I didn't find anything that would lead me to believe that they are unable to do so, since women have autonomy within the culture.

Religion is very important in the German culture. A few of the religious affiliations known in the German cultures are the Roman Church, the Protestant Church, the Evangelical Free Church, and the Islamic community. These religions affect healthcare decision-making. In a study by Shaheen and others, they researched how religious affiliations impacted the flu vaccination rate in Germany. It was found that "individuals with a religious affiliation have a lower likelihood of taking a flu shot compared with individuals with no religious affiliation because they see epidemics, pandemics, and plagues as signs sent by God." (Shaheen et al, 2022). This study proves that in German culture, religion can be important when it comes to making decisions regarding healthcare. But, there aren't many examples of where religion can be a big influence in changing the way the German culture might need to be cared for, which leads me to believe that, for the German culture, religion doesn't affect healthcare as much as it might other cultures.

In the German culture, the family structure is usually what is known as a nuclear family, which is where in the home, there will only be a mother, father, and one or two children (Main, 2021). These homes usually only have one generation within the household, with grandparents living in their own separate houses (Main, 2021). And even though gender is seen as being strict in Germany, gender roles within the home aren't as strict. Family hierarchy is trending towards change, and there has been an increase in equal opportunities for women to be the head of the household (Main, 2021).

German people have a few special practices and traditions that are tied to labor, delivery, and postpartum care. One of these is celebrating a baby, “too early”. It is believed to be bad luck to give baby gifts before the baby is born (Main, 2021). The German culture also has a longstanding tradition for when women are born into the family. When girls are born, Germans will plant trees, and when she gets engaged, those trees will be sold and the money will be used for her dowry (Main, 2021). During my research, I was unable to find anything that would lead me to believe that the German culture has anything specific on how the German culture perceives pain and suffering any different from any other culture.

Within these core values and according to my research, there is nothing that I see that would change the overarching experience surrounding childbirth. The German culture does not have any restrictions that might hinder the normal practices that we have surrounding childbirth. If anything, the research on these core values would lead me to believe that people in the German culture are more progressive and are willing to do whatever would turn out to be a successful and safe pregnancy for the mother and child. This is evidenced by the widely accepted practices of alternative medicine in Germany. All in all, I believe that the German culture is interesting, but not one that is limiting in terms of medical advancements and communication. Women can speak freely and, in turn, are comfortable with speaking to providers and advocating for themselves. If there were any tips that I would have to give any of my fellow students it would be these; make sure to be open and direct in communication, be sure to discuss HIPPA (people of the German culture appreciate privacy, as evidenced by the familial structure being comprised of, usually, only the nuclear family), and don't be afraid to offer alternative options to healthcare. The German culture is unique but it also isn't limiting, so as medical professionals, there isn't much

that needs to be thought of in terms of special conditions when it comes to healthcare for this culture.

## References