

Vulnerable Populations

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Cultural Competence

In the healthcare system, it is important that every patient receives the best quality of care. In order for nurses to be able to provide the best care they can, it is important for them to understand their patient. Cultural competence is the term used for nurses to be able to work with their patients from cultures different from their own. This allows both better outcomes and a better healthcare experience for patients, (Nair & Adetayo, 2019). Such an ability is important for nurses to be able to understand and apply. However, it has been shown that in the healthcare environment it is not always implemented. This is due to the lack of training and experiences with different cultures for nurses before they begin practicing, (Nair & Adetayo, 2019).

As previously mentioned, it is extremely important that cultural competence is implemented within the healthcare environment. According to Nair and Adetayo (2019), “by 2050, it is estimated that 50% of the US population will consist of minorities...” (paras. 2). If nurses are unable to provide accurate care to patients with different cultures, as the years go on, even more minority patients will not be receiving the best quality of care. Also, if cultural competence is missing within healthcare, it can steer minorities away from working in healthcare. This is due to the inability to work with those who are not able to apply cultural competence. Without this, hospitals will lose their diversity, which will affect its overall reputation. Minority patients may refuse to go to these hospitals as they are aware of how it can affect the care they receive. It has been shown that White women are more likely to receive reconstructive surgery of the breasts when they are post-mastectomy compared to Asian, Hispanic, and African American women. This is thought to be because of the lack of female and minority healthcare workers in the plastic surgery field, (Nair & Adetayo, 2019). Women and patients of different cultures would feel safer and more comfortable if they knew they had a woman performing the surgery.

In addition, a study was conducted and found that White women were more likely to receive reconstructive surgery of the breasts after a mastectomy when compared to African American women due to their inability to pay for the surgery, (Nair & Adetayo, 2019). As a nurse, it is crucial to understand

socioeconomical factors affect people's health, as well as their access to healthcare. These factors include education, ability to purchase and access healthy foods, occupation, and quality of housing. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, security and safety are the very first priorities when establishing good health. These can give people an increased risk of diseases and health issues. For a nurse to be able to apply this knowledge to a patient, it can allow them to be on the lookout for these diseases and to help decrease the risk of them. Also, the nurse can provide education to those who may not be aware of the risks of their situation and let them know of ways to help prevent these diseases, for example immunizations.

Vulnerable Populations

In addition to cultural competence, it is important for nurses to be able to identify and be aware of vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations are those who are known to face more socioeconomic factors that affect their health and wellbeing when compared to other populations. These populations can include but are not limited to the homeless, veterans, and the mentally ill. This paper will focus on veterans. Depending on their time and job within the military, veterans can leave the force with substance abuse disorders, PTSD, and mental health issues. According to Olenick et al. (2015), "Eighteen to twenty-two American veterans commit suicide daily and young veterans aged 18-44 are most at risk." (paras. 1). For nurses to not be aware of what state a veteran could possibly be in can lead to proper implications to not be implemented. In addition, veterans who receive amputations when in the force may have trouble find jobs when released. This can cause them to become homeless and not be able to have the funds to thoroughly support themselves, further causing depression. Also, during their time serving, veterans can potentially be exposed to radiation, chemicals, and warfare agents such as biological and chemical weapons, (Olenick et al. (2015). By having this knowledge, nurses can be prepared for the increased risk factors associated with these hazards and even educate their patient on what to look for to indicate the beginning of disease.

Reflection of Biases on Veterans

A bias that I have realized I hold to veterans is that they are taken care of after being released from the military. I assumed that since they served our country and received all the benefits that they are offered during their service that they would be well supported when leaving. However, this is not the case. I also believed that the insurance offered to veterans was good insurance to have, this also is not the case. These beliefs of mine made me confused when I would see a homeless person that would state they were a veteran. However, after doing the research and talking with my father, a veteran of the marines, the real situation of what veterans' experience upon released was exposed to me. Now knowing this, it makes me feel even more dedicated to wanting to help and be able to provide the best quality of care I can to the ones who sacrifice so much to serve our country.

What Are My Feelings About Delivering Care to Veterans?

Personally, I would love to be able to provide care to veterans. Veterans give up their civilian lives to be able to serve our country even with knowing the risks that come with the job. To be able to show my appreciation and help them during the recovery process within the hospital would mean a great deal to me. I feel obligated to further my research outside of this paper to obtain the knowledge needed so that when it comes time, I will be able to provide the best possible quality of care. To be able to provide education, resources, and be able to implement any care that will help my patient will make me a more confident and well-rounded nurse, which is what I inspire to be. The same goes for any vulnerable population. Everyone should be able to receive the same quality of care. That being the up most that a nurse can provide. A major characteristic a nurse should have is to be caring, this characteristic is not exempt based on a patient's socioeconomic status, culture, or any factor for that matter.

References

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