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Clinical Cultural Report

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Filipino Culture

The Philippines has a rich and diverse culture. In ancient times, merchants from India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, and China played a big part of the Filipino culture. Hinduism and Buddhism were the central beliefs at that time, and some of its customs and traditions are still seen today. Filipinos like to follow traditions and believe in superstitions passed down from generations. The Filipino culture is a combination of traditions from the native people and other cultures. The Spaniards once colonized the Philippine islands for over 300 years and significantly contributed to the Filipino culture. The Philippines consists of over 7,600 islands, with about 2,000 inhabited. There are over 170 languages spoken in the Philippines, with eight significant dialects. Some of the languages spoken in the Philippines, including the national language (Tagalog), derived from the Spanish language (Major Languages of the Philippines, 2019). Almost all of the traditional celebrations are a combination of Catholicism and local ceremonies. For example, every year, each town celebrates a fiesta honoring its patron saint. Usually, a festival includes an ethnic dance competition with traditional attire. Each part of the Philippines celebrates its traditions. More currently, the United States has shared its customs and culture with the Philippines and helped us gain independence (Philippine History, 2019).

Filipino Food & Religion

In Filipino culture, a family household usually consists of the grandparents, parents, and children living under one roof. It is common to find three generations

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living together. Food is something that reminds us of home and gives us a sense of safety. Food is how the older generation shows their affection to the younger generation, and is an essential factor of showing love and gratitude for all. I remember my grandmother telling me that every grain of rice is a grace of God, and we would have to finish each bite. Food is an excellent example of how Filipino culture uses the combination of religion into every aspect of life.

Healthcare & Pregnancy

When it comes to healthcare, the Filipino people do not like to voice their concerns to health professionals, and few Filipinos dare question the knowledge of doctors and nurses. In the Philippines, alternative medicines are used over medical treatment. Filipinos seek herbal remedies, massage, and spiritual healing from their Catholic faith. Bathing when sick is not recommended, and Filipinos use the concepts of “hot” and “cold” when explaining an illness.

When a Filipina is pregnant, she must satisfy her hunger. The Filipino family knows to quench the cravings of a pregnant family member so as not to cause complications to the pregnancy. Filipinos believe that craving dark-colored foods can cause a dark-colored baby, while craving light-colored foods can cause the baby to be born with light-colored skin. Another superstition is to not buy anything for the baby until the 7th month of pregnancy, or risk a miscarriage. If a pregnant woman emphasizes her hygiene and beauty, she will have a baby girl. Yet, another superstition of having someone eat food from a pregnant woman’s plate can cause her to become sleepy and lethargic (Filipino Ethnicity and Background, 2019).

Suggestions

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Nurses should keep in mind that when caring for a pregnant Filipina, to ask her specific questions regarding the outcome of her baby. Ask her if she wants to have a baby boy or a baby girl? If she wants a baby girl, the nurse should assist her with looking presentable at all times. Make sure to offer her light-colored foods only because Filipinos always want a light-colored baby. Filipinos believe that dark-colored babies are destined for hard labor under the sun. Always portray pleasant emotions, such as smiling, and expressing a friendly demeanor because unpleasant emotions experienced will cause her child to have birthmarks. Filipinos believe that buko juice (coconut water) will result in a faster pregnancy, so offer it. The Filipino father may want the placenta to bury as soon as possible because it signifies the end of labor and pain for the mother (Filipino Ethnicity and Background, 2019). When Filipinos speak, they generally consider it impolite to stare or look directly at people with whom they are talking, so this should not be implicated as mistrust or lack of confidence (Filipino Ethnicity and Background, 2019).

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