

Cultural Report

Japanese Culture

Abby Erickson

Lakeview College of Nursing

CULTURAL REPORT

Cultural Report

“The term “Culture” refers to anything including art and learning, which was generated by people and has a high level of achievement, and also refers to a system of custom or behavior which has been formed by a human society over the years” (Encyclopedia Japan, 2019, para. 1). Japanese culture has been affected by neighboring countries in Asia and around China, but was founded based on the Shinto religion (Encyclopedia Japan, 2019). Shinto and Buddhism are Japan’s two major religions. They have no set doctrine of beliefs, but there are many customary teachings that have been passed down through generations. Shintoism contains a said Four Affirmations: tradition and family, physical cleanliness, love of nature and Matsuri the Festivals (Feebly, 2019).

The traditions and beliefs of the Japanese culture may affect the nursing care of Asian women. First, traditional Asian women place a high value on modesty and may be uncomfortable with a male physician (Carteret, 2010). In many parts of Asia, sex is still considered a taboo subject and is not often discussed outside of marriage and child bearing. Because of this, parents and healthcare professionals may be reluctant to provide sexual information to young family members (Carteret, 2010). Secondly, Japanese women traditionally strive to give birth without the use of painkillers. This relates to the Buddhism perception of suffering (Schalken, 2019). “There is a belief among Japanese that labor pains act as a kind of test that a woman must endure in preparation for the challenging role of motherhood” (Schalken, 2019, para. 10). Next, Japanese beliefs and traditions may affect the involvement of the father. The father is permitted to be at the birth only if he has taken pre-natal classes with the mother, and even then, it is up to the physician. If the baby is delivered by cesarean, the father must stay in waiting room

CULTURAL REPORT

(Schalken, 2019). Lastly, unlike western countries Japanese women are encouraged to eat raw fish during pregnancy (Japan Info, 2015). In addition, doctors do not advise taking prenatal vitamins during pregnancy. Instead, it is widely believed that a healthy balanced diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, and milk provide all the necessary vitamins (Japan Info, 2015).

To provide culturally competent care, healthcare professionals must adapt their care to fit the needs of the patient. A few considerations include: assessing the language barrier, asking about traditions and beliefs, involving the patient and family in healthcare decisions, and allowing sufficient time for the interview (Gaw, 2019).

CULTURAL REPORT

References

- Carteret, M. (2010). *Modesty in Healthcare: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Retrieved October 21, 2019, from <http://www.dimensionsofculture.com/2010/11/modesty-in-health-care-a-cross-cultural-perspective/>
- Encyclopedia Japan. (2019). *Japanese Culture*. Retrieved October 21, 2019, from <https://doyouknowjapan.com/culture/>
- Feebly, H. (2019). *What Are Shintoism Beliefs?* Retrieved October 21, 2019, from <https://theancientshinto.weebly.com/principal-beliefs.html>
- Gaw, A. (2019). *Working with Asian American Patients*. Retrieved October 21, 2019, from <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/best-practice-highlights/working-with-asian-american-patients>
- Japan Info. (2015). *Pregnancy in Japan: Differences Between Japan and Other Countries*. Retrieved October 21, 2019, from <https://jpninfo.com/25598>
- Schalken, L. (2019). *Birth Customs Around the World*. Retrieved October 21, 2019, from <https://www.parents.com/pregnancy/giving-birth/vaginal/birth-customs-around-the-world/>