


Providing Culturally Competent Care to Obstetrical Patients in Asia

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Cultural Competency

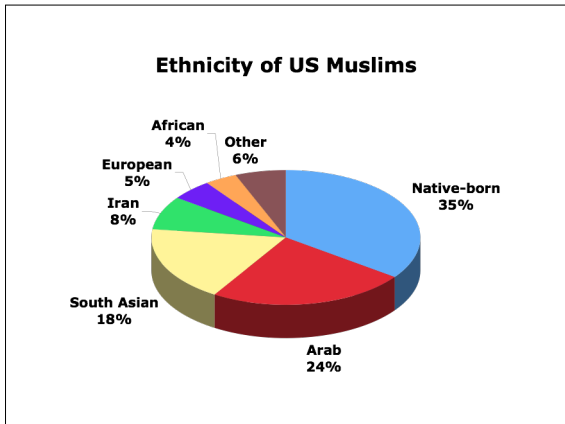
The Process of Cultural Competence in the Delivery of Healthcare Services

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<http://www.transculturalcare.net/>
http://www.transculturalcare.net/Cultural_Competence_Model.htm

- Cultural desire
- Cultural awareness
- Cultural knowledge
- Cultural skill
- Cultural encounters

Demographics

- 1.6 billion Muslims in the world
- Largest populations found in Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India
- Only 15-20% speak Arabic



Religion of Islam

- 610 A.D.
- Founder--Prophet Muhammad
- Islam "is an Arabic word that means submission--submission to the will of God"
- Those who practice the religion of Islam are called Muslims

Religion of Islam

- Islamic holy books
 - Qur'an (composed of revelations from Allah given to Mohammad by the angel Gabriel)
 - Sunnah (contains the sayings, practices, and living habits of the Prophet)
 - Hadith (recordings of the actual words of the Prophet Mohammed)

Pillars of the Faith

- *Shahada* - the profession of faith
- *Namaz* - ritual prayer
- *Zakat* - "alms-tax"
- *Ramadan* - month of fasting
- *Hajj* - pilgrimage to Mecca

Shahada (Islamic creed)

"There is no god but
Allah, and Muhammad
Is his prophet."

- Recited at birth
- Every day during prayer
- Recited at death

Namaz - Ritual Prayer

- Timings: Dawn, midday, afternoon, evening, and night
- Special cleansing ritual
- Pray on a prayer mat (or a clean rug/cloth)
- Men pray in the mosque, women usually at home
- Women not allowed to pray during menses

Ramadan - month of fasting

- Time of self-purification of body and soul, reflection on spiritual matters, identification with the poor
- Fast from sunrise to sunset
- Includes abstaining from food, all liquids, gum, smoking, sexual intercourse, and all medications during daylight hours
- Children, pregnant women, nursing mothers, the sick, travelers, and the elderly who are unable to fast are excused

Ramadan - the month of fasting

- Women are not allowed to fast during menses
- Breaking the fast at sunset -- *Iftar*, a time celebration, special meals, TV
- End of Ramadan occurs at the sighting of the new moon
- *Eid-ul-Fitr*

Zakat - "Alms-tax"

- Required to give 2.5% of one's income to charity

Hajj - Pilgrimage to Mecca

Family Values

- Elders are respected and looked to for guidance in decision-making
- Children are cherished; expected to show respect and be obedient to their elders
- Extended family structure is the norm
- Decisions are made for the good of the entire family, not just the individual

Family Values

- Marriage is highly valued and considered by Islam to be "one of the most virtuous and approved institutions" (Doi, 2005).
- Children are to be born within the bonds of marriage
- Muslim woman's greatest achievement is to bear children, especially sons

Family Values

- Islam allows a man to have up to four wives as long as he can treat them all equally
--Motivating factors (infertility, no male children)

Family Values

- Honor and shame are extremely important concepts in Muslim family life.
- Greater burden of maintaining the family honor falls upon the female members of the family
- Premarital and extra-marital sexual relationships bring shame and dishonor

Family Values

- Honor killings - restore the family honor
- To prevent any stain upon the family honor many Muslim women will not leave their homes alone or place themselves in a position in which they are alone with a male who is not an immediate family member

Islamic View of Modesty

- “Modesty is a virtue which Islam demands of Muslim men and women”
(Doi, 2005)
- Men are required to be covered from the umbilicus to the knee.
- Women from puberty are required to cover all parts of their body except for their face and hands.

Islamic View of Modesty

American proverb:
“You can not judge a book by it’s cover.”

Arabic proverbs:
“You know the book by it’s cover.”

“As much clothing you dress in so much are you worth.”

(Mallouhi, 1997)

Islamic Dress

- Cultural background influences public attire
- Some women wear Western clothing under their burkas
- Some do not wear a total body covering or even a scarf. Do not assume that these women are not devoted to Islam (ISSA, 2003).



Separation of the Sexes

- Virtue of modesty regulates interactions between members of the opposite sex.
- In general, Muslim men and women do not socialize with those of the opposite sex who are not members of their immediate family.

Separation of the Sexes

- “Sexual segregation in all its forms is not a sign of prudishness but is an evidence of the power and importance of sexuality” in the Arab culture.
- In Western culture, “the world consists of people and we relate to people a-sexually, but in the East their world is divided into male and female and they relate to each other always on a sexual basis” (Mallouhi, 1994, p. 37)

Health care considerations:

- Muslims are more comfortable with health care providers of the same sex
- Don't be insulted if a patient of the opposite sex, especially a female patient, avoids eye contact or refuses to shake hands
- Patient education messages or literature that emphasizes looking trim or uses models that are scantily dressed are ineffective
- Allow the patient to remain covered as much as possible during an exam

Health care considerations:

- Allow women to wear their hijab with patient gown in the hospital
- Sexual history
--Provide privacy
- STDs
- AIDS
- Drugs
- Abortion

Health / Illness Values & Beliefs

- Physical body is a gift from God to be nurtured and protected.
- “Cleanse yourself for Islam is cleanliness.” (Prophet Mohammad)
- Eat in moderation and avoid harmful substances (Qur'an and Hadith)
- Seek medical attention when sick and follow the physician's instructions (ISSA, 2003).

Health / Illness Values & Beliefs

- Illness and death are accepted as a part of life to be received with patience, meditation, and prayer.
- Can be considered a test of one's faith (Qur'an 2:155-157)
- Considered by some to be a result of God's wrath or punishment and an opportunity by which forgiveness for sins can be received (ISSA, 2003).

Health / Illness Values & Beliefs

- Uneducated have a limited understanding of the germ theory
- Belief in the existence of the spirit world and evil spirits (jinn)
- Charms (taveezes) are worn to ward off the jinn and/or to bring about a cure

Health / Illness Values & Beliefs

- Mental illness and some biological illnesses are attributed to the work of evil spirits
- Some conditions (disabilities, some chronic illnesses, and mental illness) that are thought to be hereditary can be considered sources of shame, especially in Arabic culture

Dietary Practices

- Similar to Jewish dietary practices
- Haram (forbidden/unlawful)
- Halal (lawful)
- Acceptable meat--beef, lamb, goat, deer, moose, chicken, duck, game birds, fish.
- Meat must be slaughtered according to Islamic rites

Haram (forbidden/unlawful)

Pork (includes anything made from pigs, such as lenti insulin and gelatin capsules, marshmallows, and other confections made with pork)

Alcohol (includes cough suppressants or vanilla and lemon extracts containing alcohol)

Blood (food should be well-cooked, Pakistani Muslims do eat liver)

Diseases & Health Conditions

- Infectious diseases in the Arab world

(Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria)

- TB
- Malaria
- Trachoma
- Typhus
- Hepatitis
- Typhoid fever
- Dysentery
- Parasitic infections

Diseases & Health Conditions

- Schistosomiasis - Egypt's #1 health problem (bilharziasis) - also common in sub-Saharan countries, such as Cote d'Ivoire
- Cholera and meningitis outbreaks are concerns in Saudi Arabia during Hajj
- TB, malaria, hepatitis -- endemic in Pakistan and India

Diseases & Health Conditions

- Genetic diseases in the Arab world

- Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase deficiency
- Sickle cell anemia
- Thalassemia (also common in South Asian countries, such as Pakistan & India)
- Familial Mediterranean Fever --autosomal recessive disorder --1 in 200 of Sephardic Jewish, Armenian, Arab, and Turkish heritage

Diseases & Health Conditions

- Consanguineous marriages
 - Purpose: Maintain unity of family wealth
Ease of negotiating a marriage with a relative
 - Results: Increase in the prevalence of genetic defects

Diseases & Health Conditions

- Female Circumcision
 - found Sub-Saharan African countries
 - Middle Eastern countries
 - Asian countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India)

Diseases & Health Conditions

- Female Circumcision
 - originated in Africa in 5th century B.C
 - practiced among non-Muslims as well as Muslims
 - associated with "righteousness and purity"
 - believed to "minimize the sexual appetites of women and thus reduce the likelihood that they will bring shame on themselves or their families through sexual indiscretions"

Diseases & Health Conditions

- Hypertension, diabetes, coronary heart disease on the increase in eastern Mediterranean countries, and also in Pakistan
- Arab Americans
 - Heart disease, cancer, CVD, diabetes are leading causes of death (r/t smoking and sedentary lifestyle)

Women's Health Issues

- Puberty--a time of celebration
- Menstruation
 - a symbol of womanhood
 - period of spiritual uncleanness
 - unable to perform daily ritual prayers
 - not allowed to participate in Hajj activities
 - sexual intercourse forbidden
- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Ritual cleansing at the end of menses
 - involves the removal of pubic hair

Women's Health Issues

- Birth control
 - the Islamic position is not clear cut
 - the decision to use birth control should be a joint decision of the married couple (ISSA, 2003).

Women's Health Issues

- Internal exams / breast exams
 - Married women will give consent
 - Should be done in the presence of a female family member, unless the patient requests otherwise
- Unmarried women
 - not acceptable
 - if medically necessary, permission may be given if performed by a female health care provider

Women's Health Issues

- Osteomalacia
- Osteoporosis



Women's Health Issues: Pregnancy

- Taking an obstetrical history
- Complications:
 - Anemia
 - Malaria
 - STDs
 - Obesity, Diabetes
 - Hypertension
 - Pre-eclampsia / Eclampsia
 - Previous C/Sections
 - Vesicovaginal fistulas

Issues Surround Birth

- Labor and delivery - a strictly feminine experience
- Recitation of the Quran during labor
- Whisper the *Shahada* into the ear of a newborn

Issues Surround Birth



- Shave the head on the 6th or 7th day to purify the child from the unclean process of childbirth
- Circumcision --traditionally at 4 - 7 years of age
- Flat heads

Issues Surround Birth

- Long straight noses
- Newborns tightly wrapped
- Excessive massaging



Issues Surround Birth

- Application of coal to the umbilical cord and eyes



Issues Surround Birth

- Breastfeeding encouraged by Islam
- Traditional Arabic folk beliefs that result in delayed breastfeeding
 - Need for mother to rest
 - Nursing at birth can cause gas pains for the mother
 - "Colostrum makes the baby dumb"

(Kulwicki, 2003, p. 98)

Issues Surround Birth

- Traditional Pakistani beliefs
 - Colostrum is bad for the baby
 - Butter given to newborns to help food slide through the GI tract and aid in digestion

Death and Dying Process

- Death
 - a journey that carries them from this world into the next
 - not the end, but the beginning of eternal life with Allah in Paradise
 - only Allah has the right or power to give or take life

Death and Dying

- Presence of family members at the bedside brings comfort
- Most prefer to die at home
- Position patient so that he or she is facing Mecca
- Allow prayer and recitation of the Qur'an

Death and Dying

- Grief process
 - Family and friends gather in the home to grieve with the deceased's family
 - Grief is openly expressed

Death and Dying

- **Bad news**
 - In Arabic culture, the oldest male relative should first be informed of the need for advanced life support
 - Disrespectful to bypass the elder figure and inform the spouse or other younger members of the family
 - Some families wish to keep the seriousness of an illness from the patient thinking he will do better if they are not aware

Traditional healers

- **Hakim** -- an Arabic word meaning wise and knowledgeable person
- A physician without formal training or degree
- Training originated from the Greek system of humoral pathology; past down from generation to generation

Traditional healers

- Diagnose a patient's illness through sphygmology, or pulse lore.
- Prescribe various herbs and allopathic drugs

Establishing Trust

1. Islamic greeting—"a salaam a leykum"
2. Small talk
3. Dress professionally and modestly
4. Lab coat
5. Feel the patient's pulse

Establishing Trust

6. Shaking hands
7. Make adjustments to the plan of care during Ramadan
8. Cloth gowns
9. Provide for privacy when taking a sexual history; make sure a sexual history from an adolescent with a parent in the room is absolutely necessary

Establishing Trust

10. Involve the family in the decision-making process and during times of teaching
11. Allow family members at the bedside
12. Repeatedly encourage your client and the family to ask questions.

Cultural Assessment Tools

- Explanatory Model
- Arthur Kleinman's Explanatory Model of Illness
- The ETHNIC Mnemonic

“Five fingers are not equal.”

???Questions???

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Recommended Reading

- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Anne Fadiman
- *Woman to Woman, Sharing Jesus with a Muslim Friend* by Joy Loewen
- *Mini-skirts, Mothers, and Muslims* by Christine Mallouhi
- *Daughters of Islam: Building Bridges with Muslim Women* by Miriam Adeney