Your Name

Instructor Name

Course Number

Date

Title: Family History

Family history interview is a great way to uncover cues about one’s family. It not only helps one understand family values and others, but also acquaints them with the ways family practices and beliefs change over time. For the sake of this assignment, I chose to interview my grandfather as he has experienced and lived with four generations. Learning about family history by interviewing someone from the older generation better unveils earlier practices of a family. They have also witnessed evolving family practices from their times to the contemporary period. Thus, in my opinion, he is the most suitable person to inquire about family history and earlier health practices.

The family history interview comprised different questions, starting with the family name, origin, education, economic status and trading practices. Later it moved further to health issues that run in our family, general healing practices and the perception of health and medicine. I belong to a Sheikh family, a prominent caste in Pakistan. The caste system in Pakistan stems from the caste system of South Asia and it is mostly determined by the family business. More or less, Pakistani people share the same cultural roots as their Indian counterpart. Sheikh is an Arabic term which means 'lord' and this title is generally attributed to families owning trade businesses. Most of the Sheikhs come from Iran, Turkish tribes and Central Asia. Our family roots also go back to Central Asia. Our family migrated to Pakistan during the independence with the desire to live in a free land and practice religion with freedom. Earlier, our forefathers migrated from the Middle East to India and set up a retail clothing business. Trade and business has always been their way of life; they never preferred to get higher education and getting employed was not appreciated. They were involved in trading practices and business dealings with Indian businessmen and developed strong ties with Indian traders. Our forefathers held a high status in their community and hired many Indians as employees. The war of independence and patriotism resulted in them dissolving their assets in India and migration to Pakistan. After migration, they settled in Faisalabad for trade purposes.

Till date, business is considered as the most celebrated way of making money. Boys in the young age are expected to take an interest in the family business. Like all the traditional families, women used to perform the house chores such as cooking, cleaning, home chores etc. Keeping in touch with distant family members was a common practice. Socializing on special occasions including weddings and religious festivals has always been admired in sheikh families. They have always been involved in exchanging gifts and money with family and friends. Sheikh families are also known for their family gatherings and hospitality. Their women always wear gold jewellery to reflect on family status. There are also some stereotypes associated with Sheikh Families such as they are considered as money hoarders, whereas they have always been involved in charities and social work. They also like to get married in their own caste.

Majority of these family practices have evolved such as more women entering higher education, moving abroad for studies and getting employed in the private and public sector. The busy life nowadays discourages family gatherings and it is confined to special events only. Youngsters are not very interested in their family business and seek to pursue their interests. House help has become very common owing to the busy schedules of working women. Family planning and nuclear families are also some of the changes elders have observed. Speaking of the medical history, my grandfather told me, diabetes runs in the family and most of the family members are diabetic. Sheikh families enjoy eating traditional sweets and foods which sometimes aggravates the medical condition. Most of the children are born with diabetes or develop the disease at a very young age.

In addition, inter-family marriages had been a favorite tradition for countless generations, which resulted in many cases of offspring with genetic disorders (Hussain and Bittles). Kids born with diabetes was also a very common challenge for the entire family. Upon diagnosis, the root cause of these cases discovered was consanguine marriage. Parents of these kids were able to convince elders of eradicating cousin marriage practices to save future generations. Furthermore, elders in the family ignore the temporary health issues and are generally ignorant in this regard. According to them, being conscious of every little thing pertaining to health is the primary cause of many diseases. Diseases are also considered as a punishment of sins in this life and save one from the punishment in life after death. Though medical science has always been trusted, most of the evils are associated with evil-eye.

The traditional method of cure was praying, home remedies, treating with fruits and vegetables and visiting traditional healers in extreme cases (Farooqi). Our family has ties with a herbal doctor who is consulted for every health issue. The priority treatment is traditional medicine or homeopathy; family doctors were considered more trustworthy as compared to a common physician. From the past two decades, changes in healing practices have been observed. Most of the youngsters are more inclined towards MBBS doctors and medical specialists in case of any ailment. However, a high majority still considers allopathic medicine as a disaster for the long-term health of the individual. Inclination towards prayers, traditional medicines and herbal treatment still prevails. Mental health issues have always been ignored based on the belief in spirituality. Healthy eating is always appreciated and parents take good care of the diet of their children. The diet consists of meat, chicken, grains, fruits, eggs, fish, milk and vegetables. Home-cooked fresh food is always preferred to the readymade, frozen and processed foods. The balanced diet ensures good health of family members. The younger generation, however, is involved in consuming junk food while partying and when not at home. The benefits of a good diet and physical activities are promoted among kids.

This interview was a very valuable activity as it acquainted me with my family history, occupation, customs and general health practices. I was not very well aware of our family origin and the status of our forefathers in their Indian community. My information about my family was limited to what I witnessed as I grew up. I have only seen the current practices and traditions of family and I was unaware of how these practices evolved. I am better able to understand how families undergo different changes; the ways education and technology brings a paradigm shift in the beliefs of people and how far we are from our own history. It creates a generation gap that eradicates the pleasure of family life. Now, I am more interested in knowing how parents and elders felt as they observed changes in the younger generation and their views about the current family practices. Self-awareness of family history of the disease also helps in prevention and better health promotion (Valdez et al.). However, I am pleased to know that our elders understood the case of consanguine marriage and co-operated with the educated younger generation. The instance of me studying abroad is also an indicator of changing traditions in the family.

**Works Cited:**

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