Health and Illness in Diverse Cultures

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**Introduction**

The term “Culture” refers to a collection of values, norms, traditions, and customs that are followed by a specific community or people in a society. The factor of culture and diversity play a great role in determining various aspects of society and help in running various processes taking place in that society (Triandis, 1994). One of the major aspects of society that is affected by the norms and values of the culture is healthcare and nursing. The providence and quality of the healthcare services in different areas vary from region to region according to the cultural values prevailing in that specific country (Halligan, & Zecevic, 2011). Sometimes these cultural values assist a lot in treating a patient while sometimes they prove to be a barrier and affect the quality of healthcare services.

**Discussion**

**Diverse Cultural Background Involved**

I recently stumbled upon a video related to the providence of the healthcare services to a patient belonging to different cultural backgrounds (Think Cultural Health, 2019). The video was about a patient who was a middle-aged Muslim female who was visiting the doctor in order to get checked after major head surgery. She had an appointment with a female surgeon, Dr. Elizabeth Smith, but Dr. Smith had to go out of the hospital due to some emergency. The patient, Nadira Ansari, was re-scheduled with another doctor, Dr. Callahan, who was a male. Nadira was bound by her cultural and religious boundaries not to remove her head covering (hijab) in front of any male, until unless he was her husband (Utas, 2016).

**Perception of the Individuals Regarding Health and Illness**

Considering the scenario presented in the video, it is evident that the cultural values and norms are not affecting the perception of healthcare and illness in the mind of the patient (Hollins, 2018). She is very much aware of the importance of healthcare and even surgical procedures, which is why she is present in the hospital to get herself checked after major head surgery.

**Overarching Issue Being Presented In the Video**

The issue presented in the video is pure of cultural and in fact, religious nature. The patient is a Muslim female and cannot remove her head covering (hijab) in front of any male except her husband.

**Possible Solution to the Issue**

In my personal opinion, the solution presented by the female doctor when she came back to meet her colleague was very good and appropriate. The medical practitioner or the healthcare professional should look forward to understanding the various aspects of diversity and understand the cultural dimensions of the patient instead of getting frustrated on the patient’s reservations or taking it personally.

**Example of Cultural Barrier in My Nursing Career**

I have also encountered multiple situations in my life, where I had to deal with patients belonging to a different cultural background.

**Nature of Issue**

Once I had to deal with an older man who came with a medical problem in his stomach. The problem here was that he was French and did not know any other language except French.

**Action to Overcome the Issue**

I tried to overcome this issue by calling one of my very good colleagues who was also French but know English as well as she had been living in the country for a very long time. She communicated with the patient and understood the issue and communicated it to me in English. Hence I was able to provide a better level of service to the patient.

**Conclusion**

In short, it can be seen that cultural background and the norms and values followed by any community play a major role in the providence of better healthcare services to the patient. A healthcare provider or the medical practitioner should focus on understanding the various cultural aspects and background of the patient so that he or she can develop a better understanding of the patient’s condition and treat them in a better way. This understanding also aids in the development of a smooth relation between the medical practitioner and patient that eventually leads to the speedy recovery of the patient.

**References**

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