

Cultural Issues & Ethics in Health Care: The key to success

Group 8

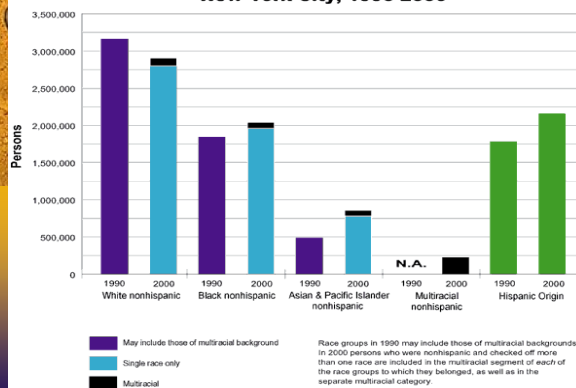
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NYC Population

- ◆ In the 2000 Census poll the largest minority group living in NYC are Hispanic Americans representing 27% (2.16 million)
- ◆ African American make up 24.5 % (1.96 million)
- ◆ 1-in-10 New Yorkers (783,000) are Asian & Pacific Islander descent
- ◆ There is a 2.8% (225,000) multiracial population

<http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/dcp/html/census/pop2000.shtml#population>

**Comparison of Population by Race and Hispanic Origin
New York City, 1990-2000**



Racial & Ethnic Differences in Health Care

- ◆ Minority groups report higher rates of poor health
- ◆ Hispanic Americans 17%
- ◆ African Americans 16%
- ◆ Caucasian 10%

<http://www.ahrq.gov/research/disparit.htm>

Cultural Health Concerns

- ◆ Heart disease death are 40% higher for African Americans than for Caucasians.
- ◆ In 1996 the US Hispanic population was 11% but accounted for 20% of new TB cases.
- ◆ Women of Vietnamese origin, suffer from cervical cancer at nearly five times more than Caucasians.

<http://www.cdc.gov/omh/AMH/AMH.htm>

To a large extent culture and health coincide. Each culture gives shape to a unique *Gestalt* of health and to a unique conformation of attitudes towards pain, disease, impairment, and death, each of which designates a class of that human performance that has traditionally been called the art of suffering

Ivan Illich, Medical Nemesis, 1976



Cultural issues in Healthcare

- The medical culture has its own dress, language, and initiation ceremonies, and practitioners of modern Western medicine need to realize that their approach is just one of many healing traditions.



Health Care Culture and Patient's Values

- ♦ The health care systems values autonomy, independence, and self control
- ♦ Patients often have different values
- ♦ A struggle occurs between the health care efficiencies goal vs. patient's modesty concerns
- ♦ Patients may become resentful to health care professionals



Religion and culture in global ethics:

- Southeast Asia – doctors hide a terminal diagnosis from patients
- Christianity: Patient may wish to receive the “Sacrament of the Sick” by a Catholic priest



Hinduism

- Hand washing essential before and after eating
- Women prefer to be treated by female medical staff when appropriate.
- Women's jewelry and boys' “Sacred Thread” should not be removed without permission of patient or next of kin.
- Advisable to ask women whether they would want their husbands present when discussing contraception.



Islamic Beliefs

- ♦ Women may refuse to be examined internally before giving birth.
- ♦ During Ramadan, if a patient decides to fast, food needs to be available before sunrise and after sunset.
- ♦ Hand washing essential before and after eating.
- ♦ Women prefer to be treated by female medical staff where appropriate.



Islam Cont.

- ♦ Dress and jewelry with religious writing on it should not be removed.
- ♦ After death, the body should not be touched by non-Muslims
- ♦ Muslims are always buried, never cremated.
- ♦ Autopsies are strictly forbidden.



Judaism

- ♦ Milk and meat products are not eaten in the same meal
- ♦ Orthodox Jews may prefer to only take kosher medication.
- ♦ Women have their bodies, limbs, and hair covered.
- ♦ Contraception and organ transplantation forbidden.
- ♦ Jewish boys are circumcised eight days after birth.



Judaism Cont.

- ♦ Autopsies not permitted unless legally required.
- ♦ On Yom Kippur, patients must be offered alternatives to oral medications
- ♦ A physician is only allowed to treat a patient when the treatment is expected to succeed, and he is commanded by Jewish law to practice if he has been licensed to do so.



Effective communication

- ♦ Be respectful and non-judgmental
- ♦ Take into consideration the role religion and culture plays in the patient's life
- ♦ Make sure your health care practices are acceptable to all of your patients
- ♦ Listen



Effective communication

- ♦ Become more educated on various cultures and their religious beliefs
- ♦ Do everything possible to establish trust and understanding to make sure there will be patient compliance