Cross Cultural Communication in Medicine:
Looking Within To See The Outside Better

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Rationale

• Quantity and Quality of care
  - Decreasing disparity of care
  - Influencing health outcomes
    • Enhancing concordance
  - Decreasing errors in medicine
  - Decreasing medical malpractice

• Scientific Research
  - Generating scientific studies that are legitimately generalizable and represent population specific issues
Objectives

• Define the concept of culture
• State several domains relevant to different cultures
• Describe several different world views and explanatory models
• Apply an approach to negotiating management across cultures
Culture
a
Frame of Reference
for
Understanding the Meaning
of Behavior
Definitions........

• Diverse - Anyone Who is Not You
• Culture - A Learned Behavior
  – All things learned to do, believe, value and enjoy
  – Process of personal awareness of self and beliefs, values
• Cultural / Ethnic Identity - a Process
  – How do you see you?
  – May not be what others “see”
• Ethnicity - Shapes self
  – Who we are? Where we belong?
  – How do we behave? May be hard to “see”
Environmental Context

ASSIMILATION

melting pot theory

PLURALISM

Salad Bowl
Finding Cultural Influence

- Can you define your culture?
Whose Values
Do You Hold On To or Adopt?

INCULTURATION
holding “IN”
early learned traits

ACCULTURATION
adopting
new traits

How do you find the out?
ASK, don’t assume.
What does culture have to do with medicine?

Values, attitudes, beliefs, communication styles regarding health and illness vary.
The Words…

Terminology in Cross-Cultural Medicine
A Balanced Focus

Individual  The Group

dynamic balance
Content Areas of Cross-cultural Interactions

- Self awareness
- World view
- Causation or explanatory models
- Spirituality
- Complementary alternative medicine
- Help-seeking behavior (community and family)
- Language and health literacy
- Historical, social and economic factors
Understanding World View and Causation
World View Dimensions

- People to Nature and to Environment
  - Mastery Over vs Harmony With
- Time Orientation
  - Future - Present or Past-Present
- People Relations
  - Individual vs Collateral
- Preferred Mode of Activity
  - Doing vs Being or In-Becoming
- Nature of Humans
  - Good vs Good or Bad
- Locus of Control
Contrasting World Views

- Spiritual forces rule
- Equilibrium rules
- Human/environs equal
- Nothing by chance
- Time is cyclical
- Group decision making

- Physical forces
- Linear explanations
- Human superiority
- Chance events
- Time is linear
- Individual decision making

Physics, religion, philosophy, medicine intertwined
Influence of World View on Illness Behavior

- Some cultures encourage expression of illness while others discourage it.
- Some cultures view good health as a gift of God.
- Some cultures believe prayer during illness will hasten health.
- Some cultures view health as a spiritual, intuitive, global - not scientific or compartmentalized.
Is Being Sick Good? Or Bad?

What Made Me Ill?

• Illness and Disease

• Explanatory Models of Illness
Explanatory Models

• Why the illness occurred
• Gives personal and social meaning to the disorder. They guide personal expectations about what will happen and what therapeutic goals to expect.
• May be difficult to explain, inconsistent and can be self-contradicting.
• Patients are often reluctant to disclose their models.
Examples

• Yin, yang balance
• Free flow of chi or xi
• Humors
• Hexes and spirits
• Healing/cleansing
Explanatory Models*

- What do you think is the cause of your illness? - etiology
- Why do you think it started when it did? and How did this start? - onset of illness
- What do you think your sickness does to you? or How does it work? - pathophysiology
- How severe is your sickness? and Will it have a short or long course? (including sick role, acute, chronic, impaired, severity of illness)
- What have you done about your illness? or what type of treatment do you think you need?
- What do you fear most about your illness?

Applying the Cultural Lens
Skills of A Culturally Effective Provider

AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE

• Acknowledging Difference EXI STS

• Understanding:
  – YOUR Cultural Values,
  – Medical Cultural Values
  – and Understanding Others Values

• GAINING COMFORT With UNCOMFORTABLE Issues

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Skills of A Culturally Effective Provider

UNDERSTANDING WORLD VIEWS

- Knowledge of
  Issues, Barriers, Perspectives

- Knowledge of
  the CULTURE, Sociocultural Variance and Different World Views

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SKILLS

• Communication and Learning
  - Enhancing Your
    Range and VARIETY of NONVERBAL and VERBAL Responses
  - Increasing your ACCURACY in TRANSMITTING and RECEIVING MESSAGES
Detecting Health Beliefs and Behaviors

- Family Background
- Health beliefs
  - Theory of health
  - Theory of illness
  - Health maintenance and disease prevention practices
  - Home remedies
  - Decision-maker
  - Health-care resources, alternatives to medical system
NEGOTIATION
Cross-Cultural Negotiation Strategies

- Low Acculturation
- Moderate Acculturation
- High Acculturation

- Metaphors
- Parallel Models
- Education and Reinforcement of Medical Models
Negotiating management options: striving for cooperation

Patient’s agenda

Physician’s agenda

Mutual understanding

Improved cooperation
The Skill of Cultural Competence

“Shifting the Frame” Augments Accurate Assessment and Effective Communication
References and Materials

• Full Curricula
  – UCSF: Culture and communication in health care, a curriculum
  – TACCT: Tool for assessing cultural competence training: a project initially privately funded, now adopted by the AAMC
References and Materials

– Doorway Thoughts-AGS

– Ham and Sloan: Cased Based Primary Care Geriatrics, chapters on Ethnic and Cultural Aspects of Geriatrics (4th and 5th editions). Jerry Johnson


– Yeo G. How will the US Healthcare system meet the challenge of the ethnogeriatric imperative? JAGS 57:1278, 2009
References

• Carrillo JE, Green AR, Betancourt JR. *Cross-Cultural Primary Care: A Patient-Based Curriculum*. Ann Intern Med. 1999; 130:829-834.


E-Resources

• Stanford: stanford.edu/group/ethnoger
• HRSA website: cultural and linguistic competence education: ww.hrsa.gov/culturalcompetence/curriculumguide
• The California Endowment website
• Kaiser Foundation website
• Manager’s electronic resource center (ERC) a cultural competence quiz produced by Management Sciences for Health