

# Health provider and faith diversity

Sociology



HealthCare Provider and Faith Diversity Health Care Provider and Faith Diversity Delia StoicaGrand CanyonUniversity: HLT-310V February 4, 2012  
Abstract The following paper describes three different religions: Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. It will detail the spiritual perspective on healing that all three of the faiths have. A description of what is important to their healing and what is important for the healthcare provider to know in caring for people of these faiths. Also there will be a summary of how these faiths differ from Christianity. Introduction The United States is known as a “ melting pot”.

This is due to all the different nationalities and faiths that are seen in our country. As healthcare providers we are faced with trying to understand all the different cultures we encounter on a daily basis in a hospital setting. There are many different faiths, some are well known such as Christianity and some are not quite so known such as Hinduism. Different faiths have different rules and regulations that they follow. Knowing all the intricate ins and outs of every religion is going to be impossible, but that should not stop someone from trying to learn all they can regarding the patients they are caring for.

Everyone has probably heard of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism, but that does not mean that a nurse or physician would know all the things that would be different in regards to caring for patients of these different faiths. Hinduism Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world. There are six major philosophies in the Hindu religion. One of the major one is Vedanta. Vedanta teaches that “ that man's real nature is divine, and that the aim of human

life is to realize divinity through selfless work, devotion to God, control of the inner forces, and discrimination between the real and the unreal.

It recognizes that Truth is one and accepts all religions, properly understood, as valid means of realizing the truth (Guidelines, 2002)". Hindus believe that the body is just a vehicle for the soul, and that when the body dies the soul transfers to another body until it can finally get to be united with God. They recognize that death is a natural part of life and the true self does not die when the body dies. There are a lot of things that the religion accepts which are part of the Western medical practices.

Seeking medical attention is something that Hindus will do, but they believe that Western medicines tends to overmedicate their patients, especially with antibiotics which could make them hesitant to start an aggressive treatment plan. Some people of this religion may practice Ayurvedo or homeopathy to cure some problems. This religion allows for blood transfusions and organ transplantation/donations. There is no rule against performing an autopsy if needed. Because this religion practices modesty, women may prefer to be examined by a physician of the same sex.

Hindus are very social and family oriented. It is important that the family be involved in the treatment and care of the patient. Women of the Hindu religion wear a red dot on their forehead to symbolize that they are married, some also wear necklaces, bracelets or toe-rings, which are not to be taken off, this is something that needs to be considered if there is a need for a procedure such as an MRI that requires all metals to be removed. Men of this faith wear a " sacred thread" which is never supposed to be removed.

Many Hindus are strict vegetarians and will not eat beef or beef products, if at all possible they should be allowed to bring food from home unless there is a dietary restriction. In situations where there is an end-of-life issue, family needs to be very involved. Hindus do not believe in artificially prolonging life and may prefer to die at home. Because Hindus practice cremation and it needs to be done within 24 hours of death it is critical that all the paperwork is in order quickly. Judaism Judaism is one of the oldest religions still around today.

There are Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jewish followers. Orthodox Jews strictly follow all traditional laws of the religion. The faith holds medical practitioners in high regards and even may break some rules if medical experts believe that it may be life saving. Most Jewish people observe the Sabbath, which is from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, in which they are not allowed to work. In this regard a Jewish patient would not be able to write, use the button for a PCA pump, drive or even turn on a light switch. As healthcare practitioners we need to keep that in mind when caring for patients during this time. The food they eat is “kosher” foods, which means that there are special ways of preparing beef. Pork, fish and gelatin are not allowed and neither is beef and milk together. Care needs to be taken with preparation of these foods for these patients, as healthcare providers we need to keep in mind that this is not just an issue of them being picky but an extremely important part of their religion. Men in this religion may wear yarmulkes “skull caps” during prayer and some may wear it all the time (Handbook, 2000).

We need to make allowances for up to 10 people in the room during prayer. When dealing with end-of-life issues there are deep debates regarding withholding or withdrawing of life-saving therapy and families may want to consult a rabbi before making any decisions. The Jewish faith requires that burials happen quickly after death and autopsies are not permitted unless required by law. There is a requirement that a family member or representative of the family remain with the body at all times after death until burial, and also that amputated limbs be available for burial.

Islam The Islamic religion is slowly becoming one of the largest religions out there. People who follow the Islamic religion are known as Muslims. Islam believes in "that all events, including health events, are the will of God, Muslim patients may be more likely to display acceptance of difficult circumstances and be compliant with the instructions of health care providers (Healthcare Providers, 2010)". It is believed that the preservation of life overrides all guidelines, rules and restrictions.

This faith requires extreme modesty and for men all body parts between the navel and knees need to be covered, for women all but the face, hands and feet should be covered at all times when in the presence of anyone outside their family. Muslims are required to pray five times a day on a prayer mat facing Mecca. Patients that are ill can be excused from prayer if it is medically deemed that it is detrimental to their health. Patients are required by their faith to perform ablution with water before prayers and after urination and defecation. Islamic rule is that you use your left hand for dirty and right hand for clean duties.

Muslims will prefer to use their right hand to eat and as a healthcare provider if you are feeding a Muslim patient it is preferred that you also use your right hand. Islam has a very strict rule regarding consumption of certain foods. Foods that are not permitted include pork, or pork derivatives and alcohol or alcohol containing foods. This could be a problem when giving certain medication that contains pork or alcohol. Providers should be aware of the medication given to a patient that is Muslim in order for them to follow the halal diet.

Islam sees death as a natural part of life. They do not require treatment to be provided if it will only prolong a terminal illness. During end-of-life care, families may want to pray with the patient at bedside. This religion forbids autopsies, unless required by law. In the Islamic faith, burial needs to happen as soon as possible after death. The body should be washed by a family member or representative of the family and not by hospital staff, the body also needs to be covered by a sheet and face Mecca if at all possible.

#### Comparing and Contrasting

The previous religions discussed all have certain rules that need to be followed when it comes to dealing with healthcare. Christianity in general does not put any restrictions on healthcare providers. Certain Christian faiths such as Jehovah's Witnesses do not allow blood transfusions because they feel it is not part of their body. The three religions discussed feel that anything that can be done to save the person should be done and that life is important. Interestingly enough Hinduism, Judaism and Islamic faiths all have restrictions on food that they deem unclean.

The only Christian faiths that have restrictions on food are Catholics and Orthodox Christians, which do not eat meat during Passover. There are many differences between Christianity and other faiths and not too many similarities when it comes to healthcare. Conclusion In doing the research for this paper, there have been a lot of good points brought up in regards to taking care of patients that are of a different faith than myself. It is extremely important to me as a person and as a nurse to know who my patients are and what their beliefs and faiths are.

In order to be able to take care of a patient, physically and emotionally we need to know the restrictions that we may face in our everyday dealings with them. Working in a hospital that sees an enormous amount of people from all over the world it is important to keep religion and culture in mind when providing care. Being able to do research and finding all the rules and requirements is a great educational tool to use and will make your patients more apt to trust you if they see that you understand where they are coming from. References Bennion, R. (2000). Handbook on cultural, spiritual and religious beliefs.

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