

Saudi arabian- american cultural considerations research paper example

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Introduction

Each person is culturally unique. However, in terms of society, we are used to considering culture as an integrated and dynamic system, which embraces knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, ideas, habits, customs, languages, values, symbols, rituals etc (White, 2004). Considering all above-mentioned elements is necessary for successful work of the nurse as nurses should be able to provide diverse population of clients with culturally appropriate care. Therefore, nurses should be aware about cultural peculiarities, inherent for natives of different countries. For the purposes of this assignment we will consider Saudi Arabian-American cultural considerations with a special respect to beliefs and rituals, communication and dietary considerations.

Beliefs and rituals

As opposed to the modern population of the USA, whose predecessors substituted native population, Saudi Arabia can be proud of a significant number of beliefs and rituals, which are preserved in everyday life of Saudi Arabians. The most important difference with respect to beliefs and rituals in the U. S. and in Saudi Arabia lies in the fact that rituals and beliefs are highly different across the USA due to heterogeneity of population, whereas people in Saudi Arabia tend to share similar rituals and beliefs. To exemplify the great difference in rituals and beliefs, it is worth comparing any atheist, living in the USA and a person, who adheres to Santeraia system of beliefs, which stems from experience of native people (De la Torre, 2004). Santeraia system's adherents seem to have a ritual or a belief, applicable for any

situation, whereas behaviour of atheists seem to be guided only by practical experience and reasons.

Rituals and beliefs of Saudi Arabians stem either from their religion (the only and official religion in Saudi Arabia is Islam; majority of people belong to Salafi movement) or customs. Main values of society are connected with maintaining social stability and Islam. The justice system in Saudi Arabia is based on Sharia. Sharia puts some important obligations on Muslims. They are called " fard". " Fard" category includes such necessary rituals as articles of faith, five daily prayers, which cannot be missed, fasting, obligatory charity, and the Mecca pilgrimage. Six articles of Muslim Faith are as follows: one God; the angels of God; the books of God; the prophets of God; the Day of Judgment and predestination (supremacy of the will of God). Mustahabb category of Sharia law includes a variety of rituals and beliefs, connected with marriage, family life and funeral. For instance, a range of important rituals are associated with funeral. They include necessary burying of the dead body, enshrouding it with a special white cloth, funeral prayer and positioning the body in such a way that the head is faced towards Mecca, which is critical holy place for all the Muslims.

Except above-mentioned categories of human behaviour, Sharia law also includes such ones as makruh and haraam behavior. Makruh behavior means such one, which is not considered sinful, but is described as undesirable, whereas haraam category embraces different types of behaviour, which are recognized to be sinful and deserve severe punishment under criminal law. It is necessary to mention that haraam category includes breaking some of dietary laws (e. g., Dhabihah, which is based on prescribing the method of

animals' slaughter), theological obligations (e. g., obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca) and dress code (wearing hijab).

Communication

In ' Communication' subsection we will consider verbal and non-verbal communication peculiarities of Saudi Arabia natives comparing to the style, dominant in the USA. The official language of Saudi Arabia is Arabic. This language has an immense vocabulary and spoken by the hole Arab world. The most important principle of communication between Saudis is " saving face". It means that when communicating with one another, Saudis tend to aim at saving any community member of embarrassment and discomfort. Women are prevented from free participation in discussions as from the very childhood they are taught to participate only in such roles, which affect the household. However, it is necessary to underline that nowadays more and more exclusions from this rule can be traced in Muslim society. For instance currently adhere to Euroamerican values and even engaged in business. Extremely high rate of respect is granted to the elderly in terms of communication. By communication it is obligatory to use correct titles and meet verbal expectations of interlocutor by using verbal communication stereotypes. Hand shaking and kissing can be considered appropriate only when representatives of the same gender meet and greet each other. Considering non-verbal communication it is, first of all, necessary to emphasize that as opposed to American culture, Saudi Arabian culture belongs to high-context ones. This means that stress is placed on such nonverbal signs as dress, haptics and paralanguage. Saudi Arabian

appearance and dress is much more conservative than in American culture. Men are required to wear head garment and white shirt, while women should use clothes to veil their faces, when in public. Some gold and silver adornments can be considered objects, prohibited by Sharia law. Haptics plays a great role in communication as in Islam left hand is believed to be reserved for unclean purposes (Lewis & Churchill, 2008, p. 142). It is worth remembering that one of most importance values for Muslims is silence, therefore, tone of communication is of great importance for them.

Dietary habits

Muslim dietary considerations can be connected with objects, prohibited by Quaran (haraam objects) or the most important Muslim dietary law called Dhabihah. According to Quarann, Muslims are strictly prohibited from consuming flowing blood. Among haraam objects some types of meat can be found. Most popular example is pork. All kinds of intoxicants (including all types of alcohol) are also considered haraam objects. Some extra considerations refer to consuming those types of meat, which are permissible under Quaran. Dhabihah contains recommendations on the proper slaughter of animals. Special requirements concern a person, who commits the slaughter and the method he used to do it. It is worth mentioning that for representatives of other cultures (including American), who are aware about animal rights, ritual slaughter can be considered an act, which causes severe sufferings to the animal.

Conclusion

The main difference between Saudi Arabian and American culture, which predetermines appearance of almost all other differences lies in cultural homogeneity, inherent for Saudi Arabia. Religiosity and adherence to customs calls forth conservativeness of Saudi society, which can be traced in terms of religion and beliefs, communication and dietary habits. All these aspects of culture are highly different in the U. S. and Saudi Arabia, therefore, nurses should be aware of cultural considerations, described above, when delivering service to Saudi Arabians.

References

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