

Free research paper on health care provider and faith diversity

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Introduction

Different faiths and religious beliefs have different approaches to the issue of health care. Emphasis is placed on the location and the personality of the individual offering the service. There is a need for nurses and other members of the professional team to displays a good understanding of the different faiths with a view to understanding their position on the issue of health care provision. Some religious groups have no belief in healing from health care providers, while some others believe in both healing from health care providers and their own faith in healing. It is therefore imperative for the health care provider to have a good knowledge of as many religious beliefs as possible in order to learn their perception about religion and their own concept of the healing process.

Health care providers in any institution that provides health care need to be equipped with the basic understanding and knowledge of the belief system of the different religions of the world. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized based on the fact that these health care providers may be faced with a situation whereby a patient holds a religious belief which is different from the one that the health care provider owns. Adequate knowledge of these beliefs will no doubt help the health care provider to understand how to deal with the patient. This research paper would therefore seek to examine the different religious beliefs as they relate to the provision of healthcare to the people and their various perspectives on healing. These religions include Sikhism, Buddhism and Shintoism.

Sikhism

Sikhism is a faith or religion of the Sikh which has its origin dating back to the 15th century in the Punjab region of southern Asia. The Sikh holds the belief that there is only one God for all people of the earth. They also hold the belief that once an individual dies the life of such an individual goes back to God (Singh and Shankar, 1998). The religion of Sikhism does not prevent adherents from seeking medical care from hospitals when they require such. The religion believes in the healing from God and Science. The religion respects science therefore adherents are advised to seek medical care from hospitals. There is no prohibition in the type of medical care that followers can undergo. Therefore, patients who practice the religion can have surgical operations, they can be admitted in hospitals and they can benefit from any medical service being provided in hospitals. The leaders of this religious faith go to lengths to encourage followers to seek medical attention from hospitals when they require such. They believe in medical care and science (Shackle, Mandair and Singh, 2011)

However, it is important to note that shaving of the hair on any part of the body is prohibited by the religious belief of Sikh. Therefore, patients that practice this religion refuse this procedure either it is for the sake of an investigation or it is in preparation for a surgery. This is because the followers of this religion believe that shaving of the hair is considered a disrespect to the faith and followers of this faith are not allowed to do this at any cost (Shackle, Mandair and Singh, 2011)

Also, on matters concerning the issue of confidentiality, the Sikh place a high premium on the importance of extended family, it is important to seek the

consent of patients if they want any discussion on any sensitive issue to take place in the presence of a third party. Elders of the family are the most respected people in the Sikh faith. They are given the respect of seeing the patient before any other member of the family does so in times of visitation (Shackle, Mandair and Singh, 2011). This practice is done in an effort to ensure that the extended family system is respected.

In a situation whereby a language barrier is reached in which the patient cannot communicate (either partially or effectively) in English language, there might be the need for an interpreter to offer such a service. This individual must be someone who understands Punjab well. It is most desirable to employ the services of a family member to do such. This is done in order to respect the dignity of the patient, which is better done with the presence of a family member (Shackle, Mandair and Singh, 2011).

The Sikhism religion does not prevent medical practitioners who practice a different faith or religion from providing care to the patient. They attach more importance to the belief in science, irrespective of the personality or religious belief of the person offering the service.

The philosophy of the religion as compared to the Christian philosophy on matters concerning healthcare services does not differ to a large extent. The only difference is the issue of shaving of body hair. Both religions believe in God's healing and also in medical healing (Portfield, 2005). The Sikh believers appreciate any health care professional who performs his/her duties without any bias towards the provider's belief but rather with respect to the patient's own religious belief. They appreciate this effort as the care giver going the extra mile in ensuring the well being of their patient.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion of the Indians. It began in the 5th century BCE. They hold different beliefs from other religions of the world. The difference is evident in matters concerning medical care, the concept of eternity and Gods. Buddhists believe in both traditional and hospital medicine, they don't believe in faith healing, they believe that medicine is the cure of the sufferings our bodies encounter through this life. Buddhists do not believe that healing is from a supernatural being but they believe that restoring the conditions of the mind and body will restore health, they believe in death of a healthy person (Keown, 2009).

The spiritual part of healing to the Buddhists is that the process of good health is a result of four major principles; which are observing the condition, seeking the cause, prescribing the cure and applying the cure (Keown, 2009). They also believe that our health is much controlled, to a large extent by our minds; Buddhists believe that living a stressful life will eventually lead to the development of an unhealthy body. Buddhists believe that meditation is the best cure for the body since much of the act of concentration is acquired by keeping the mind far away from meditating on the stressful conditions; therefore, with peace of mind, the body remains healthy.

Buddhists prefer hospitals to be the best place for meditation which brings about healing. The major aspect of healing in this religion is meditation that aims at restoring the body's conditions to the unstressed state. The most important aspect to the Buddhists when acquiring health care from a person of a different religion is that they have to believe in their spiritual interpretation of suffering/ bad health. They also focus on the key principles

to good health (Keown, 2009). This helps them acquire adequate concentration for meditation for them to regain their health. They believe in the medical treatment offered irrespective of the religious belief of the health care provider treating them.

Patients that hold a belief in Buddhism will appreciate the effort of any health care provider of a different religion that lets go of their religious beliefs in favor of the patient's belief to achieve healing. Healing of the patient is the key principle for any health care provider. Therefore, it is advisable to let go of some of one's religious beliefs in order for the patient to be healed. When compared to Christianity beliefs, they believe that illness is as a result of stressed body and mind.

Shintoism

Shintoism is a religion found originally among the people of Japan. This religion carries out some practices which link the present day Japan to the ancient Japan.

The Shintos wear charms which, according to them, are worn to aid healing. (Littleton, 2003). Shintos believe in faith healing, that after wearing the mamoris they will acquire healing from their ancestors. The major aspects of healing among the Shinto's are making offerings, chanting and praying on a regular basis engaging the ancestors and gods (Littleton, 2003). During these ceremonies, the Shintos pray to their ancestors to provide them with power of healing. They believe that sick would receive healing after this procedure. They give offerings to their gods and ancestors for healing. When getting health care services from people of different religion, since the

Shintos believe in healing from their gods and ancestors, they still need to have faith in their religion because they believe that healing comes from it (Littleton, 2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research on the different religious perspectives of healing has no doubt, provided me with an insight into the different religious perspectives on healing. It has also provided an invaluable tool that I will continue to utilize in my professional career as a care giver. I will go on to find out about more religions in order to have a holistic picture of the various religious perspectives as this will no doubt increase my level of professional competence in discharging my duties appropriately.

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