

Group paper analysis: the effects of culture in patient- provider interaction

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Group Paper Analysis: Group #3 The Effects of Culture in Patient-Provider Interaction and Means for Dealing With It Shawn Burke, Shin-Hyung Lee, Siamak Mahdavi, Thuan Nguyen, Brittany Oswald, Teasha Walters As a culturally diverse country discrepancies in healthcare have been documented and continue to serve as a threat to satisfactory patient care. Data has shown that minority groups suffer more greatly from cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer, amid other ailments.

In 1998, the Health Resource and Services Administration Health Disparities Collaboratives was designed to provide proper care and treatment for citizens that are uninsured and/or medically vulnerable, such as certain racial groups. This organization is aimed at lessening racial and ethnic disparities presented in health care and improving the quality of care for this population (Grossman et al. (2008). Although this progressive system aids in eliminating health care disparities, there is still an evident effect of culture on patient-provider interactions.

With an increasing change in the demographics of our country, it is imperative to improve patient-provider interactions among various races and ensure proper treatment for all. In order to counteract these disparities and promote appropriate care for all races, health care systems formed the subject of cultural competence. According to Betancourt et al (2003), in a culturally competent health care system, the significance of culture and implementation of services to properly meet culturally necessity needs are integrated within and focuses on the health beliefs for different cultures and specific treatment for different patient populations.

In order to function properly as a culturally competent health care system, specific requirements are mandated. The health care system needs a diverse staff reflective of the community surrounding the institution, translators to communicate with patients, specific training for health care providers, and valuable signs and information available in different languages (Betancourt et al. 2003, Anderson et al. 2003). Implementation of a culturally competent health care system increases the potential for improving patient care and efficacy and helps to eliminate health care disparities among culturally diverse individuals. It is very important to understand cultural values in order to improve patient-provider interactions. Many foreigners face difficulties when they are faced with seeking medical attention mainly due to only having limited vocabulary skills as well as not being familiar with medical terms commonly used in the United States. These main cultural differences lead to many people having great difficulty when trying to communicate their symptoms to a medical professional. It is comprehensible that health care providers have a hard time giving a diagnosis if a patient cannot correctly describe their symptoms.

However, this can be improved by respecting cultural values such as courtesy, empathy, and harmony. According to the study "Patient satisfaction in Japan" written by Elluch, the author states that health care providers should emphasize cultural values such as courtesy, empathy and harmony to improve foreign patient satisfaction when delivering medical services. This is because satisfied customers are an important asset for the healthcare provider as satisfied customers tend to reuse the service and recommend it to their families and friends.

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In order to reduce the threats which are the discrepancies in health care, respecting and considering cultural values and differences will be useful to improve patient-provider interactions among various races. Moreover, by emphasizing those cultural values it will help to maintain long-term relationships between patient and providers. There are numerous documentations describing the consciousness of physicians towards health beliefs and values of their patients.

As previously mentioned, barriers in communication between physicians and their patients due to differences in cultural stance can lead to interruptions in care and undesirable patient outcomes. Research by Street and Haidet (2010) states “ current evidence indicates that physicians often have a poor understanding of their patients’ perspectives with respect to patients’ preferences for involvement in decision-making, desire for information... beliefs about treatment effectiveness and prognosis...and emotional states” (Street & Haidet, 2010).

It is imperative for physicians to understand patients’ cultural perspective because treatment care plans are based off the communication that doctors have with their patients. Street and Haidet conducted a cross-sectional observational study that used the CONNECT instrument to assess the “ 6 domains of an individual’s perceptions about a particular health condition...”(Street & Haidet, 2010) within a “ convenience sample of 207 patients and 29 primary care physicians from 10 outpatient clinics” (Street & Haidet, 2010). The key results indicate “ Physicians' perceptions of their patients' health beliefs differed significantly (P