

Ethical dilemma

Health & Medicine, Nursing



1) Provide an example of cultural beliefs and practices that affect health outcomes in a family you visited. I experienced the effects of cultural beliefs and practices on health outcome during treatment of one of my patients during my clinical practice. The husband of one of my female patients refused the nurse visit saying that ' he' felt that his wife's condition has improved and that she did not need care from the nurse. The concerned patient had a skin problem around her back. It was suspected that it was a fungal infection. The lab test was conducted last week. However, even before the test results were discussed with the patient, her husband stated that her back has improved after taking medications that were prescribed to her, and that she does not need any further care.

The patient is from another country. In the culture that she belongs to, it is believed that the males in the family have the right to take all the decisions regarding the family members. The females are not allowed to take any decisions even if it concerns their own health. In my patient's case, this belief can affect the health outcome for her because instead of depending on her own feelings and health condition, she depended on her husband's opinion, and gave him the permission to take all the decisions concerning her health. In health system, it is the patient who should tell, and not her relatives, whether her health and physical condition has improved or not, as she is the one who is suffering from the problem. Moreover, the patient can succumb to the pressure from the males in the family and decide to say that her health is improving even if she does not feel any improvement. This could lead to a contraindication when providing the care to this patient as it was not the patient, but her husband, who took the decision regarding her

care. Moreover, it can worsen the condition leading to further health complications, and even a threat to the patient's life. This particular case made me realize how powerful the cultural beliefs are. These restrictive beliefs are followed in the family even when the family members know that they can prove to be fatal to the health of the family members and especially, the females in the family.