Heritage Assessment Paper

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Heritage Assessment

Applying a heritage assessment in evaluating the persons need is very useful especially with regards to health. Heritage refers to the individual’s reflection on their culture and tribe through lifestyle. It involves the individuals' family backgrounds, religion or the ethnic community. The importance of the family’s traditions and practices to the person may determine their health and overall being. This information allows nurses to gather more information about the patient which is very helpful especially during the treatment procedures and practices. Through heritage assessment, the nurse collects more information about the beliefs, values, and cultures of the individuals all which are key players in the individual's overall health. People may live possessing both the traditional cultures which are norms of their traditional cultures while at the same time living with modernity which is outside of their cultural norms. During the heritage assessment three different families were assessed and questioned on various aspects of their culture and beliefs. This paper will focus on these three cultures of the Jamaican/Haitian, Guyanese, and St. Vincent families, and compare the similarities and differences related to health maintenance, health protection and health restoration and the cultural uniqueness of each individual interviewed.

The usefulness of the assessment is outlined in two different roles that are; effective care and respectful care. Ineffective care, positive outcomes of health will be achieved after the patient derives satisfaction. While in the respective care, the nurses will take into consideration the preferences, expressed needs and the values of the individual’s culture to make sure that they feel comfortable with every procedure. Other factors include cultural and linguistic competence primarily due to cultural biases; focus on value and cultural beliefs which are very different from the people. This information about a person acquired through the heritage assessment helps the nurse get a clear picture and also helps them interpret a lot about a patient.

In comparison of the three families from different cultural backgrounds consisting of Haitian/Jamaican, Guyanese and St. Vincent, differences and similarities were found on cultural approaches to health maintenance. Health maintenance is an approach of preventing diseases and illnesses and promoting health. One similarity is that culture is central to their health habits. Health Maintenance for all three cultures is very similar based on the extreme balanced diets and physical activity as a form of exercise. Maintaining a balanced diet is of paramount importance to health and what is perceived as health. Staying away from processed/fast food and incorporating more home cooked meals into their diet which incudes but is not limited to the consumption of raw foods from the earth which includes yams, Ackee, and potatoes as a natural way to maintain health as they believe fast/processed foods can make you sick; thus is a way to protect them from any illness. They also prefer. Physical activity/exercise is another way to stay in shape and maintain health but it slightly differs amongst the families. Between the St. Vincent and Guyanese culture, we use labor (household chores, work, etc.) as form of exercise while the Jamaican/Haitian family goes to the gym to get and stay in shape. Though all three families currently reside in the U.S, The American culture recommends proper diet, physical exercises and using consumption items responsibly (Rosdahl & Kowalski, 2008), and hence it would not be difficult to continue traditions.

Health maintenance and health protection might sound similar, but while one encourages healthy behaviors, the other prevents/protects the health and safety of individuals from illnesses and diseases (Galvan, 2017). Health protection practices among the three cultures include cleanliness and natural remedies as opposed to the typical western medicine, and religious affiliations. Many Caribbean cultures support the medical help from the traditional healers who use herbs and other bush medicines in the treatment/prevention of diseases. Herbs and bushes such as Senna pot and mauby, is good for cleansing the intestinal track and cleaning the blood. Natural teas such as green, ginger, and mint is also consumed; most importantly consumed in the morning to prevent gas and the pain associated with gas. The Jamaican/Haitian family gets their vitamins in the pill form as opposed to the Guyanese and St. Vincent family. We get our vitamins from natural fruits and vegetable (oranges, beets, celery, carrots, ginger, etc.). Very seldom to we take vitamins. Furthermore, not indulging in a lot of fast foods and are also very health conscience (Lambert et al. 2014). Lastly, although most Christian/Catholic families consider death a part of a journey to meet God, the divine power of God and hence prayer and going to the church are seen as pillars in the illness preventions and promoting health amongst the three cultures.

Health restoration which involves restoring the individual’s health to a stable level is also has some similarities and differences among the three cultures. African Americans are reluctant in seeking medication unless their health condition gets out of hand and go to the hospital when necessary. On the other hand, the white family with the American origin takes nothing for granted regarding their health. The family seeks medical attention routinely every year. Those who have medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and others monitor their conditions regularly while others chose to participate in daily routine finesses (Lambert et al. 2014). White and African Americans do not have so much regard to privacy especially when the nurse or other medical practitioners are attending to them compared to Muslim Americans who require privacy and are also keen on genders. Except for several shy cases, African American and white women are okay when attended by male medical practitioners while the male does not mind being attended by female nurses or doctors (Judd). African Americans, Christians, and Whites people in America are okay with organ transplants.

Conclusion

It is clear that we have families from different cultures and different practices that lead to some similarities and differences traditional health care and practices. The African Americans from the Jamaican origin prefer foods directly from the farms including yams and potatoes while Americans people who have adapted to American culture indulge in lots of fast foods. In the Muslim cultures, several foods such as pork and alcohol consumptions are against the sharia law and the Quran. Heritage assessments are important in helping the nurses draw the first impression on the patients and also in helping them recover. Nurses should learn a lot from the heritage assessment on the culture and lifestyles of individuals and hence apply the necessary knowledge when dealing with these people. This experience includes regards to the patients’ cultures and respect to their traditions.

References

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