Nursing Cultural Competency when Caring for Hispanic Patients and Families

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PURPOSE
To begin a grounded theory inquiry of nursing care needs of Harrisonburg’s Hispanic Community by asking Hispanic members of the community: What cultural knowledge should nurses have when caring for patients and families of Hispanic culture and ethnicity?

BACKGROUND
• Harrisonburg’s Hispanic population doubled between 2000 and 2010 to become about 16% of Harrisonburg’s population.
• Increasingly, James Madison University nursing students and graduates are caring for patients and families of Hispanic culture.
• Students and nurses report frustration when delivering nursing care because of language barriers and lack of understanding of Hispanic cultural and healthcare practices.

METHODS
• A qualitative grounded theory approach was used to examine Hispanic patient experiences with nursing care in local acute care and community care settings.
• Using a snowballing sampling technique, 26 participants were interviewed.
• Some focus groups were conducted solely in English, others in Spanish with an interpreter present.
• Focus group data collection continued until saturation was reached.
• Audiotapes were translated and transcribed by an independent transcriber and by the researchers.
• Transcripts were reviewed both independently and collaboratively to identify themes.
• Data were examined, coded, compared and categorized.

FINDINGS:
Three themes were identified.

“Up to You”  - The internal patient ability to negotiate healthcare system, and includes things patients did or felt responsible to do.
• Analyzing and assessing a situation at home
• Taking matters into own hands
• Medicating at home, either with over the counter or herbal remedy
• Asking questions in healthcare setting
• Learning American culture and English language
• Identifying differences between home and here

Connectedness: Specific actions that nurses have taken in participants’ experiences that have established positive rapport between patient and nurse.
• Identifying self and said she would be taking care of me
• Stating, “I am going to help you”
• Asking, “Do you speak English?”
• Trying to speak Spanish
• Conveying sense of intention to help
• Willing to care, willing to step out
• Smiling and having an open and pleasant demeanor
• Exhibiting patience and not acting inconvenienced

At the Mercy of the Healthcare System –Issues identified by participants that make them feel very vulnerable and frustrated as they attempt to navigate the American healthcare system.
• Lack of information and clarity about cost of care
• Insurance coverage or lack of
• Nurses do not make sure patients understand
• No time
• Waiting for nothing, expensive
• Not always “getting something”
• Not knowing if a bad experience is due to being Hispanic
• Fear of being taken advantage of

CONCLUSIONS
Findings suggest that Hispanic patients are asking for patient-centered nursing care with an emphasis on the patient as an individual. These findings support the need for personal nurse-patient interactions to create an environment in which nurses can work collaboratively with patients to meet patient care needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE
• Learn a little bit of Spanish, even “Hola” and ¿Habla inglés?” is good
• Smile
• Provide information in Spanish
• Help patient understand information
• Convey interest in patient as a person
• Address patient by name
• Acknowledge patient and convey intention to help
• Speak slowly, with pauses to allow for understanding
• Assess need for interpreter
• Identify self: “I am your nurse.”

Partial funding for this research was provided by a James Madison University Department of Nursing Faculty Incentive Grant.