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| **CULTURAL GROUPS AND LANGUAGES** | **BELIEFS AND PRACTICES** | **NUTRITIONAL PREFERENCES** | **COMMUNICATION STYLES AND CHARACTERISTICS** | **HEALTH CARE/DEATH AND DYING CONCERNS** |
| AMERICAN-African descent English | Primarily Protestant, some Muslim. One  particular denomination is not as  important as the general role of  religion in one's life. Very family oriented. Authoritarian child rearing practices.  High value placed on obedience to  parents and elders, although this is  changing similarly to mainstream  American culture. Future oriented,  great deal of optimism about future. | Dark, leafy vegetables, red meat, cheese, potatoes, rice, bread, fresh and dried fruits. Rely heavily on salt and frying. Believe in eating well and having good food to offer to guests. Frequently lactose intolerant. | Wide variation in language, with some speaking Ebonics, which is a language with many roots in Western and Central Africa. Frequently are aural learners. Address adults formally, unless given permission to be informal. More oriented to situation than to time. | High tech care is viewed by some as only being used in trauma situations. Recent drastic shift in the grief process as there has been a sudden increase in the death rate related to violence. Maybe suspicious of health care; may use various home remedies for illnesses and not seek medical care until a crisis. Important to thoroughly explain disease process and expected course of improvement. Traditional rituals are in evolution, but usually involve giving the deceased a funeral in the home church and a stirring eulogy. Cremation is generally not acceptable. |
| AMERICAN English | Primarily Christian or Jewish. Family oriented. Customary to treat males and females with equal respect. Very time oriented-value punctuality and responsibility. Regard all people as more or less equal. | Beef, chicken, seafood, potatoes. Fast foods. | Freely express opinions--used to freedom of speech. Greet others openly, directly, warmly; strangers often greet with a handshake. Typically maintain a social distance of about an arm's length. Prefer to father information before making decisions. Informal style may be perceived as disrespectful and uncultured by other cultures. Teens often rebellious. | Expect excellent health care, accustomed to "high tech" care. Family members and close friends usually visit the sick. Practices related to death are rooted in the many different religious beliefs in the U.S. Friends and family often send flowers and cards at time of illness or death. |
| ARGENTINEAN Spanish | 90% Catholics, some Protestants and Jews. Strong believe in Saints, Purgatory, and Heaven. Outside of cities may be superstitious. | Emphasis on meat, especially beef with homemade pastas, pastries, and local wines. Mate: National beverage that is stimulating and addictive like coffee. | Talkative, very expressive, direct and to the point, expresses feelings easily. Extroverted. Good eye contact. Like personal and physical contact such as holding hands, hugging and kissing. | Educated, yet reluctant to get medical attention or accept new medical advancements. Independent, often deny disability. Keep "old fashioned" remedies; herbal teas, pure aloe, natural oils, poultices. The whole family gets involved with the ill family member. |
| BRAZILIAN Portuguese Diverse backgrounds including: Europe, Africa, Indians | Catholic. Growing Evangelical representation. Candomble-similar to Santeria. Macumba (Syncretistic blend of African, Brazilian Indian, and Roman Catholic) Future oriented; great deal of optimism about future. | Beans and rice are staple but enjoy great variety. Feijoada-black beans, beef, pork. Churrasco-charcoal broiled meats. Manioc-(vegetable) Tropical fruits. | Very sociable. Will stand close to each other. Much social kissing, hugging, touching, good eye contact. | Family unity great--will want to be actively involved. Tend to trust medical personal, place great faith in doctors and nurses. Poorer people place much emphasis on herb treatment, teas and balsams. |
| CANADIAN English, French | Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, English, Welsh Irish, Native American. Family usually second to work. Sensitivity seen as weakness. Direct yes/no answers given and expected. | French influence in Montreal and Quebec. Food preferences similar to that of the midwestern U.S. | Little physical contact with conversation. Honest, willing to accept one at their word. | Accustomed to socialized medical care. Willing to wait for treatment. Accepting of information from nursing staff. |
| CAYMAN English with some changes in accent and some verbs | Island is very religious. Majority of the island is Baptist or "Church of God". Voodoo and psychics outlawed. | Fish, turtle, beef, goat and conch. Rice, beans and plantains. Fried food very rich in fat, cooked or fried in coconut oil or milk. | Like to be acknowledged and good eye contact. Prefer no touching or kissing. Very talkative and known for their friendliness. Everyone on the island knows everyone. | Like to be told what is going on by doctor. Would rather talk to doctors than nurses. Prefer one to one care. |
| CHINESE Many dialects spoken, one written language | Religious. Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity. Harmonious relationship with nature and others, loyalty to family, friends and government is praised. Public debate of conflicting views is unacceptable. Accommodation is not confrontational. Modesty, self control, self reliance, self restraint and face saving are valued. Hierarchical structure for interpersonal and family interactions. Past oriented. | Belief in theory of "yin" (cold) and "yang" (hot) according to when they are sick. No food with "yin" after surgery (e.g. cold desserts, salads). Lactose intolerance. Soy sauce, MSG, and preserved foods. Diet consisting of vegetables and rice. Tofu (bean curd) can be prepared in various ways. | Quiet, polite, unassertive. Suppress feelings of anxiety, fear, depression, and pain. Prefer "non-touch". Eye contact, touch sometimes seen as offensive or impolite. Emphasize loyalty and tradition. Self expression and individualism discouraged. | Women uncomfortable with exams by male physicians. May not adhere to fixed schedule May fear medication institutions. Use herbal and Western medicine at the same time. Traditional: acupuncture, herbal medicine, massage, skin scraping and cupping. Alcohol causes flushing. Risk for cancer of easopharynx, esophagus, stomach, liver and cervix. |
| CUBAN Spanish | Primarily Catholic, some Protestant. Santeria is a belief that may include animal sacrifice. | Roast pork, black beans, rice, plantains, yucca, chicken, Cuban bread, café con leche, strong coffee. | Conversation may seem loud, tend to speak over others. Prefer strong eye contact. Use hands for emphasis and credibility. | Family visits the sick. Extended family supports the immediate family of the sick. Insulting to the patient if there isn't a large family/friend presence. |
| ECUADORIAN Spanish Quechua-Indian | Primarily Catholic but may believe in birth control. Increase in Protestants, Baptist and Jehovah Witness. Very respectful towards religious leaders. 1% of population is wealthy with much political control. Family size remains large. | High in fruits and proteins, increasing starches; rice, potatoes, corn. Food is prepared fresh daily, usually with salsa. Coastal diet-rice, fish, ceviche. Drink beer, soda. | Extremely polite. Reserved. Respectful. Always helpful. | Very much into pampering family members, staying overnight with family members. Not stoic when it comes to pain. Very private, modest. Embarrassed if they do not look their best. Extremely protective of family, parents live with children. |
| FILIPINO English, Spanish, Tagalog | Predominantly Catholic. May seek both faith healer and traditional physician when ill. May believe that illness is the will of God. | Rice, vegetables, fish, fruit. Want meals HOT. Believe in theory of hot and cold food. (Certain foods should only be eaten hot; others only cold. E.g. milk is only drunk hot.) | Value and respect elders. Family oriented. | Often leave medical matters in "the hand of God". Sometimes may seem noncompliant with traditional medical instructions because of faith. May use home remedies; herbal teas, massage, sleep. |
| GUATEMALAN Spanish; Mayan heritage; European influence | Primarily Catholic. Increase in Protestants. Very respectful towards elders. | Diet high in fruits, vegetables, rice, beans and tortillas (corn flour bread). Food prepared fresh daily. | Quiet, reserved and respectful. Will not question for fear of insulting professional. | Modest, private and stoic. Believes in alternative methods of healing. European heritage, strong family ties. |
| HAITIAN Creole, French | Catholic and Protestant. Voodoo. | Large breakfast and lunch. Light dinner. | Quiet, polite. Values touch and eye contact. Large social gaps between wealthy and poor. | May be hesitant to ask questions of medical care providers. May view oxygen as a sign of serious illness. May share prescriptions and home remedies. |
| INDIAN Hindu | Hinduism centers on belief of cyclic birth and reincarnation. The status, condition and caste of each life are determined by behavior in the last life. | Cow is considered sacred. Some are vegetarian, never eat beef. Many dietary restrictions. Patient should be questioned when admitted. | Limit eye contact. Do not touch with conversation. | In death, a priest may tie a thread around neck or wrist to signify a blessing. Do not remove. Family may request to wash body. Eldest son responsible for funeral rites. Priest may pour water in the mouth of corpse; family very particular about who touches body; bodies are creamated. |
| ITALIAN Italia | Primarily Roman Catholic. Do not believe in contraception or abortion. | Main meal at midday: pasta, meat and fish with antipasto, cheeses, fresh fruit and espresso. | Talkative, expressive of emotions. Direct and to the point. Eye to eye communication. Like personal and physical contact. | The whole family is involved in health care decisions. Very independent and educated, but may be reluctant to obtain medical attention. |
| JAMAICAN English, Patois | Predominantly Christian (Catholic, Baptist, Anglican) Strong Rastafari influence. | Beef, goat, chicken, fish, rice and peas, lots of spices. Some avoid pork and pork products due to religious beliefs. | Respect for elders valued. Reserved: no public display of affection. Curious, may ask many questions. | May try home remedies before seeking medical care. Values informed consent. Respectful of M.D.'s opinion. May be reluctant to admit to pain. May not adhere to a fixed schedule. |
| Japanese | Self praise or the acceptance of praise is considered poor manners. Family is most important factor. Behavior and communication are defined by role expectancy and status. Past oriented. | Food presentation is important. Fish and soybean are main sources of protein, as well as meats and vegetables (some pickled). Rice and noodles. Tea. Soy sauce high in sodium. Lactose intolerance. | Use attitude, actions and feelings to communicate. Talkative persons are considered show-offs or insincere. Openness considered sign of immaturity, lack of self control. Implicit nonverbal messages are of central importance. Use concept of hierarchy and status. Conflict is minimized. Avoid eye contact and touch. | Family role for support is important. Insulted when addressed by first name. Confidentiality very important for honor-information about illness kept in immediate family. Mogolian spots. Prone to Keloid formation. Cleft lips or palate not uncommon. alcohol causes flushing. Control anger and pain. |
| JEWISH English, Yiddish | Orthodox (very strict), Conservative Reform (less strict). Sabbath is from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. | Kosher foods prepared according to Jewish law, doesn't mix meat with dairy products. Blood and animal fats not allowed in diet. | Orthodox men do not touch women (except for wife). Very talkative and known for friendliness, but may be stoic and authoritative. Health care providers should limit touch to necessary care. | Jewish law demands seeking complete medical care. Donor transplants not acceptable le to Orthodox Jews. Orthodox Jews believe that entire body, tissues, organs, amputated limbs, blood sponges should be available to family for burial. Post mortal: do not cross pt's hands. |
| KOREAN Hangul | Shammism, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity. Believe in reincarnation. Family oriented. | Rice, kim chee (fermented cabbage). Often lactose intolerant. Frequent alcohol intolerance. Little conversation during meals. | Value proper etiquette. First names used only with family members. Using children as translators is insulting to adults. Proud, independent. | Family needs to be included in plan of care. Respond to sincerity. Believe in balance of hot and cold forces. |
| MEXICAN Spanish (over 50 dialects) | Predominantly Roman Catholic. Priest attends in time of crisis. Limited belief in "brujeria" (magical, supernatural illness precipitated by opponents using evil forces.) Family first priority. Children celebrated and sheltered. "Old world" formality, etiquette and manners equal breeding. Title and position more important than money. Diplomacy important. | Corn, rice, and beans. Heavy use of spices. | May use dramatic body language. Dramatic displays of grief. Direct confrontation considered rude. | Women do not expose body. Believe that outcome of circumstances is controlled by external forces (may affect compliance with health care). May use teas or mints for home remedies. May seek the care of a folk healer prior to traditional medical treatment. |
| MUSLIMS Different languages depending on the area | Believe in one God "Allah" and Mohammed his prophet. Five daily prayers. Zakat, a compulsory giving of alms to the poor. Fasting during the month of Ramadan. Pilgrimage to Mecca is the goal of the faithful. Religion regulates whole life. Older and more conservative Muslim often have fatalist view. | No pork/alcohol. Eat only Halal meat (type of Kosher). Do not force foods when it is religiously forbidden. | Limit eye contact. Do not touch while talking. Women cover entire body except face and hands. | Abortion before 130 days-fetus treated as discarded tissue; after 130 days, as a human being. No postmortem; no body parts shold be removed. Before death, confession of sins with family present. After, only relatives or priest may touch the body. Koran, the holy book, is recited near the dying person. The body is bathed and clothed in white and buried within 24 hours. |
| NORTHERN EUROPEAN Speak the language of their country and some English | Very similar to American customs. Protestant with large Catholic population. Multi-ethnic groups. | Comparable to American diet--meat, vegetables, and starched. Coffee, hot tea and beer. | Courtesy is of utmost importance. Address by surname and maintain personal space and good eye contact. | Maintain modesty at all times. Stoic regarding pain tolerance. Death is taken quietly with little emotional demonstration. |
| PAKISTANI Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki, English | Predominantly Muslim-believe in one God "Allah" and Mohammed, his prophet. Five daily prayers. Compulsory giving of alms to the poor. Fasting during month of Ramadan. | Eat only Halal meat (similar to Kosher). No pork. No alcohol. | Limited eye contact. Do not touch with conversation. Women cover entire body except face and hands. | Abortion: before 130 days gestation, fetus is discarded; after 130 days fetus is treated as a human being. Believe in confession of sins with family present prior to death. Only priest or family may touch body after death. Non-Muslims should use disposable gloves when touching the body. Body is bathed, clothed in white and buried within 24 hours. |
| PUERTO RICAN Spanish | Primarily Catholic, but growing number of Protestants. Great respect for elderly, especially elderly women. Strong family ties, including extended family. Strong element of machismo. | Diet high in complex carbohydrates (breads, cereals, soda crackers, rice). Legumes, rice and beans eaten often. Meats include chicken, pork sausage, turkey, beef and marinated pork. Use many spices (cilantro, garlic, sazon) but food isn't spicy like Mexican. | Like to be engaged on a personal level. Like to touch and feel close (both physically and emotionally) to those around them. Are not offended by personal questions. | Breastfeeding is frequently practiced. Entire family often wishes to be involved in health care decisions. |
| VIETNAMESE Vietnamese, French, Chinese, English | Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, CaoDi, Hoa Hoa, Catholicism. Family loyalty is very important. May believe in supernatural cause for disease. | Rice with green leafy vegetables and fish sauce for flavor. Meat used sparingly and cut into slivers. Tea is main beverage. Lactose intolerance common. Alcohol intolerance common. | Formal, polite manner. Limited use of touch. Avoid eye contact. Use both hands to give something to an adult. Never snap one's fingers to gain attention. Always use title with name. Head is sacred--avoid touching. | Silence or reluctant smile may convey negative emotions. Regard back rubbing as an uneasy experience. Healthcare provided should not tell patient of terminal illness. Family should be told first. Organ donation may cause suffering in next life. Hospitalization is last resort. Flowers are for the dead. |