

Cultural Respect In the Laboratory

ASCLS Annual Meeting - San Diego
July 31, 2017

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Objectives

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

- Discuss how cultural respect reduces healthcare disparities and promotes high-quality health care in populations
- List factors that can impact health-related communications
- Discuss how laboratory services can offer the appropriate testing for populations they serve

Cultural Respect



DEFINITION

- Delivery of services respectful of and responsive to health care beliefs, practices, and cultural and linguistic needs of diverse patients
- Culture includes combination of bodies of knowledge, beliefs, and behavior
 - Includes personal identity, language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values
 - Often specific to ethnic, religious, geographic or social groups

Healthcare & Cultural Respect



- Cultural respect elements
 - Influence beliefs & belief system surrounding health, healing, wellness, illness, disease, healthcare delivery
 - Enables providers to deliver services respectful of and responsive to these health beliefs, practices, cultural and linguistic needs

How Can Cultural Respect Make a Difference?



- Benefits consumers, stakeholders, communities, & supports positive health outcomes
- Critical to achieving accuracy in medical research, too
- National standards for Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care (CLAS) intended to advance healthcare

CLAS Standards



Standards intended to:

- Provide health equity for all
- Provide improved quality of care for all
- Help eliminate health care disparities

Cultural Respect



- Enables organizations to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
- Framework of Cultural Competency needed
 - Definition—ability & willingness to respond respectfully & effectively to people of all cultures (i.e., be culturally respectful)
 - Process ultimately serves to reduce healthcare disparities & improve access to high quality health care

Cultural Respect



- Demographics rapidly changing in U.S.
 - Underscores reality that reducing or eliminating disparities not only moral obligation but also a business imperative
 - 2015—U.S. 37% minorities; 2060—projected to rise to 57%
 - If disparities not addressed, will exacerbate impact on public health
- Traditional healthcare accounts for only 20% of “healthy living”

Cultural Respect



- Total healthcare
 - Mostly depends on socioeconomic issues
 - Income
 - Social status
 - Education
- Higher income individuals
 - Have better health & access to medical care
- Education levels, availability of social support, physical environment have direct impact on health status of persons

Healthcare Professionals & Language



- Have our own languages—not everyday language
- Jargon has greater effect on those with limited literacy
- Cultural differences part of exchange with patients, caregivers, other workers
 - Not all languages have words for everything
 - Physical location, people's shared or different experiences may effect meaning of translated/interpreted words

Cultural Groups



- People learn communication rules in these groups
 - **Who** communicates with whom
 - **When** to communicate
 - **Where** something may be communicated
 - **What** to communicate about
- Language
 - Can impair successful communication
 - Use of jargon
 - Can fail & create misunderstanding

Health Literacy



DEFINITION

- Degree to which individual can obtain, process, understand basic health services and information
 - 90 million Americans have limited health literacy
 - 20 million Americans speak poor English
 - 10 million Americans speak no English
 - More than 300 languages spoken in U.S.

Cultural Competency



- Teaches staff different cultures, religious backgrounds have different healthcare expectations from us
 - e.g., Jehovah's Witness—no transfusions
 - Must be responsive to diverse cultural beliefs & practices, preferred languages, health literacy, other communication needs
 - BE AWARE—own cultural background impacts attitudes, beliefs, health, etc.
 - No one stereotype of culture of origin—are blend of life's experiences, acculturation to other cultures

The Challenge



- Different cultures have different values, styles, personalities
 - Each of these has significant effect on how job is performed
- Different levels of cultural awareness
 - My way is the only way
 - I know their way, but my way is better
 - My way and their way

Cultural Awareness Levels



- My way is the only way
 - Only aware of own way
 - Ignore impact of own way on others
- I know their way, but mine is better
 - Differences perceived as source of problems
 - Tend to ignore others' ways or reduce their significance
- My way & their way
 - Aware of own & others' ways of doing things
 - Choose best way for situation
 - Understand differences can lead to problems and benefits
 - Willing to use diversity to create new solutions & alternatives

Diversity of Thought—The New Frontier



- Greater the diversity in organization & patients, greater the variation in perspectives, approaches
- Varying types of thought guards against "groupthink" (dangerous tendency)
- Inevitable result of increased pluralism
- Benefits to organization
 - Increases adaptability
 - Larger pool of ideas, experiences
 - Inspires associates to perform at highest level

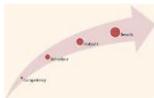
Cultural Competency in the Laboratory

Laboratory Staff



- Many are on margins of society
 - i.e., not part of mainstream, popular culture
- Most popular culture
 - Young, white, male
 - Heterosexual
 - Christian
- Female snubbing ethnic female
 - Snubbing herself
 - Lives on same margin as ethnic female

Cultural Competency in the Laboratory



- Language
 - Cultural
 - Development reflects the thought process
 - Responsible for thinking patterns
 - Dictates how person classifies or describes sequence of events, conditions
- KNOW population(s) served
 - Taboos
 - Health beliefs
 - Rules of interaction

Cultural Competency in the Laboratory



- Culture dictates how professionals greet, address patients and the patient response
- Different cultures have different views on touching
 - Native Americans might return a touch with a cold, hard stare
 - Many Asians might recoil
 - Hispanics tend to respond warmly
 - Be aware & act accordingly

Quality Aims for Healthcare

Cultural competency intersects with all aims:

- Timeliness
 - Provide accurate, timely laboratory data so well-informed clinical decisions are made
- Efficiency
 - Monitor repeat testing & specimen collections
- Effectiveness
 - Address test overuse and underuse, appropriateness



Quality Aims for Healthcare

- Patient-Centeredness
 - Considering & respecting patient preferences
- Equity
 - Every patient, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. deserves high quality health care
- Safety
 - Ensuring accurate test results are reported on the right patient at the right time



Patient Safety Competencies



*Cultural competency & respect intertwined with all of these as well!

Strategies to exercise cultural respect in the laboratory

- Materials available in other languages
 - Know the populations you serve
- Access to an interpreter
 - In person or via telephone
- “Frontline” staff trained in appropriate responses for common situations

Strategies to exercise cultural respect in the laboratory

- Team-building exercises
 - Improve working relationships within the lab
- Communication/leadership styles “analysis”
- “Brown bag” series for CE for lab professionals
 - Seminars on basic tenets of religions, ethnicities, cultures

Strategies to exercise cultural respect in the laboratory

- Establishment of private consultation area
 - Avoid sensitive conversations within earshot of other patients or staff
- Reference ranges options
- Participation in grand rounds
 - Provide consultation on laboratory test selection and interpretation of results
- Patient satisfaction surveys
 - Practice continuous quality improvement

Summary

- Cultural respect is an essential component of quality health care & patient safety
- Reduces disparities & improves patient satisfaction & outcomes
- Laboratory professionals play a key role in these efforts

Questions?

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