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Effects of cultures on child health

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Introduction: Health is influenced by culture which is a dynamic factor as well as biological and environmental factors. Health practices are the outcome of health beliefs generally originated from the culture of individual. Cultural practices of families are directly related with the child health

Aim: The aim of this study was to review the evidences based on the literature regarding the effects of different cultures on child health.

Method: In this brief review, studies especially conducted in the recent five years were examined by using the key words “child”, “culture”, “care”, “nursing”, “health”, “religion” and “belief” on Google Scholar, Google E-Library, Pubmed, SAGE Journals databases.

Findings: In the studies examined within the scope of research, it was established that factors such as culture, religion/belief, genetic factors, and geographical region educational level, immigration, and family structure influence the child health. It was determined that families reflect the cultural and spiritual values on the health practices and seek the solution of health problems in these values. According to the beliefs of four major religions and doctrines, it was found that child health and healthcare practices are influenced in various aspects. Cultural values of child and family effect the perception of health and disease, the statement of pain and the care practices. It was established that traditional health practices and cultural beliefs have an important place in all communities. Traditional methods applied on the child may be categorized as practices influencing the child health adversely and practices having no effect on the child health within today’s medical literacy. It was seen that some traditional practices such as waiting a certain time for starting breast-feeding of infant, not giving colostrum, covering the infant body with salt may affect the child health adversely. On the other hand, it was determined that practices such as putting a yellow scarf near the face of infant for preventing the jaundice, praying, putting an evil eye in the infant’s room do not affect the child health, however they are effective in comforting the family. It was found that factors such as believing and adoption of traditional practices, cheap and easily accessible practices, problems experienced in health institutions, difficulty in accession to health institutions are among the reasons for families to apply to the traditional practices for health promotion of their children. Since cultural structure of child and family is directly related with health and well-being level, nursing care practices and programs should be developed according to holistic and transcultural model.

Conclusion: Different cultures and religious practices influence the child health and care practices. Nurses should be careful about the dimension of reflections of child and family’s cultural beliefs and practices on health. They should provide holistic care by combining spiritual and psychosocial care within this framework. Nurses should use the transcultural nursing model in their care and they should lead to increase the quality of care with individualized care interventions.

Biography

Sumeyye Yildiz completed Nursing Bachelor Programme in Omer Halisdemir University Zubeyde Hanim School of Health in 2014. He is pursuing Master’s in Gazi University Health Sciences Faculty in Pediatric Nursing field since 2016. She has started to work as a Research Assistant in Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University Health School in Pediatric Nursing field since 2016. Then she has been working in Gazi University Health Sciences Faculty in Pediatric Nursing field as a Research Assistant since 2016.

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