

A Systematic Review Of Literature On The Importance Of Cultural Humility In Providing Optimal Palliative Care For All Persons

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Abstract : Healthcare providers need to comprehend cultural diversity for optimal patient-centered care, especially near the end of life. Although a universal method for navigating cultural differences would be ideal, culture's high complexity makes this strategy impossible. Adding cultural humility, a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience leads to a meaningful process in palliative care generating respectful, honest, and trustworthy relationships. This study is a systematic review of the literature on cultural humility in palliative care research and best practices. Race, religion, language, values, and beliefs can affect an individual's access to palliative care, underscoring the importance of culture in palliative care. Cultural influences affect end-of-life care perceptions, impacting bereavement rituals, decision-making, and attitudes toward death. Cultural factors affecting the delivery of care identified in a scoping review of Canadian literature include cultural competency, cultural sensitivity, and cultural accessibility. As the different parts of the world become exponentially diverse and multicultural, healthcare providers have been encouraged to give culturally competent care at the bedside. Therefore, many organizations have made cultural competence training required to expose professionals to the special needs and vulnerability of diverse populations. Cultural competence is easily standardized, taught, and implemented; however, this theoretically finite form of knowledge can dangerously lead to false assumptions or stereotyping, generating poor communication, loss of bonds and trust, and poor healthcare provider-patient relationship. In contrast, Cultural humility is a dynamic process that includes self-reflection, personal critique, and growth, allowing healthcare providers to respond to these differences with an open mind, curiosity, and awareness that one is never truly a "cultural" expert and requires life-long learning to overcome common biases and ingrained societal influences. Cultural humility concepts include self-awareness and power imbalances. While being culturally competent requires being skilled and knowledgeable in one's culture, being culturally humble involves the sometimes-uncomfortable position of healthcare providers as students of the patient. Incorporating cultural humility emphasizes the need to approach end-of-life care with openness and responsiveness to various cultural perspectives. Thus, healthcare workers need to embrace lifelong learning in individual beliefs and values on suffering, death, and dying. There have been different approaches to this as well. Some adopt strategies for cultural humility, addressing conflicts and challenges through relational and health system approaches. In practice and research, clinicians and researchers must embrace cultural humility to advance palliative care practices, using qualitative methods to capture culturally nuanced experiences. Cultural diversity significantly impacts patient-centered care, particularly in end-of-life contexts. Cultural factors also shape end-of-life perceptions, impacting rituals, decision-making, and attitudes toward death. Cultural humility encourages openness and acknowledges the limitations of expertise in one's culture. A consistent self-awareness and a desire to understand patients' beliefs drive the practice of cultural humility. This dynamic process requires practitioners to learn continuously, fostering empathy and understanding. Cultural humility enhances palliative care, ensuring it resonates genuinely across cultural backgrounds and enriches patient-provider interactions.

Keywords : cultural competency, cultural diversity, cultural humility, palliative care, self-awareness

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