Mexican-American Culture

WebQuest Description: Occupational therapists are trained to provide client-centered practice and are expected to provide appropriate treatment. However, the treatment has to also be culturally and ethically appropriate. This webquest developed by occupational therapy students from the University of the Sciences for a class project on cultural competency. It is our intention that this webquest will help occupational therapists and occupational therapy students learn more about Mexican Americans to ensure that they are more adept when treating this particular culture.

Grade Level: College / Adult
Curriculum: Professional Skills
Keywords: Occupational Therapy, Cultural Competence, Mexican American culture, Hispanic, Latino, Purnell's Model of Cultural Competency
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Introduction

As health professional students, it is important to develop cultural competency to provide quality health care to the greater public. To be culturally competent, a health care practitioner must be able to consider a given client’s view on health from their personal cultural perspective. Over the past few decades, there has been a huge increase in the Mexican American population, both in urban and suburban settings. Using Purnell’s 12 Domains of Culture to guide this webquest, we found sites to provide information on Mexican American culture. Our hope is that we can broaden the health professional student’s perspective on Mexican American culture and take it into consideration in future practice. This particular population was chosen because Hispanics, primarily Mexicans, are one of the fastest growing populations in America today. Studies and census results from the federal government show that 52 million or 16.7% of the United States population is comprised of people of Mexican decent. As this population continues to surge in number, it is imperative to realize that there is a greater chance of having a Mexican patient and having background knowledge about them is essential in providing culturally appropriate care.

For information regarding the information from the U.S. Census refer to: http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf

Tasks

The main objectives are to: Identify portions of Mexican culture and develop understanding of the culture within the American culture. Present health care professionals with a brief overview of the culture using the Purnell model of cultural competence. Provide additional links for continued knowledge of Mexican culture. In addition to that, this webquest will help allow you to gain basic competence in these following areas of the Mexican culture:

- Communication and interaction
- Personal space
- Touch
- Expression of pain
- Sharing of personal information
- Culturally appropriate behaviors for those who are ill or disabled
- Culturally appropriate behaviors for children, adults, and older adults

This knowledge will help you better your cultural competency as well as learn what types of treatment are appropriate and not appropriate.

Process

To complete the webquest, the occupational therapy students will use Dr. Purnell’s model of cultural competency. This model, as shown above, encompasses a comprehensive list of characteristics and qualities that can be used to learn more about a certain culture. The 12 domains of culture as identified by Purnell include: Overview, Heritage, Communication, Family Roles and Organization, Workforce Issues, Biocultural Ecology, High-Risk Behaviors, Nutrition, Pregnancy, Death, Rituals, Spirituality, Health care practices, Beliefs toward health care practitioners. The image of the model of cultural competency was used from the PDF located below.

Teacher Page

The resources for helping you complete your webquest have been systematically organized in the same order as Purnell’s 12 Domains of Culture:

1. Overview

Before a person can understand a culture they must acknowledge the culture's history, location and traditions. These characteristics may play a big role in how that culture behaves and functions. The overview should include concepts such as current residence, effects of topography and economics (Purnell, 2008). This website provides information on different aspects of Mexico such as history, economy and geography. It discusses the various mountain ranges, landscapes and countries that border Mexico. In addition, the website explains the history of Mexico and how the country has increased in revenue over the years.

There are a variety of high-risk behaviors that affect the Mexican culture. When interacting with the Mexican culture, it is important to focus and understand their verbal, nonverbal, and other communication styles to help understand their contextual use of language, communication skills, and social skills (Purnell, 2008; Deresky, 2000). This website also includes suggestions on how to communicate with to Mexicans when providing health care treatment (CDC).

This website provides an overview of Mexican culture and it highlights their communication styles. Through understanding the communication style of Mexican culture, the website explains how their cultural values can influence both their nonverbal and verbal communication which can impact ways that they seek treatment in a healthcare setting.

This website explains about the guidelines to follow when communicating with Mexicans. For example, with in a cultural environment they are private about sharing information about their families. Also, how they are affected individuals when they are feel comfortable and safe communicating with another individual which is highly beneficial to learning about in the health field and in the business environment.

This website emphasizes the importance of understanding culture and even describes the various cultural characteristics of Mexicans within their family structures. It breaks down topics such as socioeconomic status and religion in relation to the family.

The family roles and organization is described on this website through different topics such as government and politics. It provides the reader with different insights into the importance of family roles and organization.

Family roles and organization plays a big role on how the family interacts with each other. Everyone has a designated action in their culture that supports and facilitates the unification of the household. Family roles and organization includes concepts such as head of the households, gender roles, and childbirth practices (Purnell, 2008).

This website addresses the roles and culture associated with Mexican families. It identifies the traditions of Mexican families and the importance of family and unification. The information even extends to the community and international relationships.

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7. Nutrition
The importance of food is often overlooked in our society. The different kinds of foods consumed by the Hispanic population varies from where the food or spice originated from. In this population, a traditional dish includes some form of carbohydrates such as tortillas, corn or rice. Accompanied by different forms of protein such as beans, eggs, fish and chicken. Along with carbohydrates and protein, there is an adequate portion of vegetables and fruit added to the dish as well. Some of the popular choices include tomatoes, squash and papaya. For more information refer to the website that is listed below.
In today's world, many people do not have the time to cook or create meals that they prefer. The American culture has placed a high demand on quick frozen meals, vegetables and single serving dishes that has now become the "go to" strategy when time is short. However, the Hispanic culture ceases to inherit this tradition. A great deal of importance is set on having fresh and quality food that is made from scratch. For more information refer to the website that is listed below.
http://www.hispanicad.com/cgi-bin/news/newsarticle.cgi?article_id=17850

8. Pregnancy and Child Bearing Practices
When providing services to the Mexican population related to the area of pregnancy and childbearing practices, it is important to consider the individuals cultural beliefs towards health care providers, their healthcare practices, accessibility to healthcare, and their expected family roles during this time. The age of the individual who is expecting also helps to determine which type of intervention is the most appropriate.
In a study aimed to look at prenatal education needs of foreign-born, Hispanic, and minority expectant mothers in the United States, results indicated a high need for prenatal education classes. Due to limited access to health insurance, it is reported that many minority women are receiving prenatal care from hospital or community based clinics where contact time with the healthcare provider tends to be very limited, focusing only on the physical needs of expectant mothers (Berman, 2006). The National Center for Health Statistics reported that in 2008, the U.S. birth rates for adolescents was 41.5 births per 1,000 females between the ages of 15 and 19 years of age. Specifically, among the Hispanic race, rates were the highest at 77.4 per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years (CDC, 2011). These findings are very important to consider as a practitioner when providing services to this population. Due to the high number of teenage Hispanic mothers, an important area to focus on is in providing more accessibility to educational programs. Education can be provided within communities to implement positive youth development behavioral interventions as it is considered to be an effective method in decreasing sexual risk behaviors in adolescents (CDC, 2011). Educational programs can also be provided to support mothers as they transition into their new roles by teaching them the necessary skills needed to properly take care of their infants. To obtain more information related to Mexican pregnancy and childbearing practices and to learn more about the needs of this population when providing healthcare services, please visit the following websites:
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1595295/
https://bearspace.baylor.edu/Charles_Kemp/www/hispanic_health.htm

9. Death Rituals
This article refers to how latinos and hispanic americans have different grieving behaviors, and how their spirituality through christianity has helped their grieving process.
This article refers to the traditions that Mexicans Americans cling to when dealing with death's in their community and in their family. It also emphasizes that to understand Hispanic traditions of funerals, it is imperative to understand the culture behind it.
http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art40851.asp
This article evaluates and describes one of the major holidays that Mexico celebrates, which is the Day of the Dead. The website goes into detail about the practices of this holiday, and what the people do to commemorate and celebrate their dead.
http://www3.niu.edu/newsplace/nndia.html

10. Spirituality
This journal article studies the religious practices and spirituality of the Mexican American people. It talks about the different religious denominations that Mexican Americans are apart of, and the common Catholic roots that Mexicans have.
http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/religion/n155.xml

11. Health Care Practices
This research report addresses health care statistics of Hispanics living in the United States. It discusses profiles of Latinos typically lacking health care providers, typical healing practices in the culture, the quality of care provided to the population, access of information, communication difficulties, as well as diabetes and other life-threatening illness management.
http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/91.pdf
This website provides information on beliefs and customs of hispanic americans involving health, social customs, health practices, privacy, and birth. It addresses typical American beliefs around health care and how these views can sometimes be ethnocentric towards other cultures, including the Hispanic culture.
http://www.culturediversity.org/isp.htm
Traditional medical practices and diseases are described in this website. The term is listed in Spanish and the description is stated in English. Traditional remedies are also described in order to understand how the Latino culture treats the illnesses.
http://ethnomed.org/culture/hispanic-latino/mexican-cultural-profile

12. Healthcare Practitioners
Understanding different cultures within healthcare practice as a healthcare professional is extremely important. As healthcare professionals, it is important that cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness and cultural competence are embedded in practice. Services from healthcare professionals are directed towards benefiting the client and looking at what is in the client's best interest for recovery. For more information on how healthcare practitioners can provide adequate services, specifically for people of the Mexican culture, please visit the following websites:
http://ethnomed.org/culture/hispanic-latino/mexican-cultural-profile
https://bearspace.baylor.edu/Charles_Kemp/www/hispanic_health.htm

Standards
Credits
Other
Additional References
Evaluation

To test what you have learned from the webquest, please take the following quiz:

1. Mexican American patients may feel uncomfortable if you touch them during treatment. Therefore, it is important to build trust and rapport first with them through small talk. True or False
2. When treating older Mexican Americans, you should directly ask their children or relatives to translate first. True or False
3. When speaking to Mexican Americans, you should maintain direct eye contact at all times. True or False
4. Mexican American families are matriarchal in medical situations and you should speak and explain all treatments to the mother. True or False
5. It is important to keep an open mind when treating Mexican Americans because they may use traditional and herbal medicine to supplement the traditional Western medicines. True or False
6. It is important to build rapport with Mexican American patients in order to earn their respect and allow them to open up to you. True or False
7. If you have a patient who is suffering from a diagnosis that has clear recognizable symptoms, but the family argues that it is due to supernatural causes, you should ask them what the traditional Mexican treatment for that is and determine if you can incorporate that into your intervention as long as it doesn’t hurt them. True or False
8. When explaining to your Mexican American client, make sure they truly understand you because a large portion of the Mexican American population do not have high school diplomas or higher education degrees. True or False

If you scored a 9/10 (90%) or 10/10 (100%), then you are culturally competent in Mexican American culture! If you scored a 8/10 (80%) or 7/10 (70%), then you have an understanding of the culture, but should refresh up your knowledge. If you scored a 6/10 or lower, please review all the links and resources and retake the quiz.

Answers: T, F, F, T, T, T, T, T, T, T

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After you have completed this webquest, you can see the importance of cultural competence. Purnell’s 12 Domains of Culture provide a basis to give us a thorough understanding of any given culture. Because the Mexican American population is growing, it is important to take their cultural views into perspective to provide this population base with the utmost quality of care. The links provided in the webquest give you not only an immediate face value understanding of the Mexican American culture, but it also provides an in-depth experience of the culture through studying all aspects including death rituals, workforce issues, family roles, etc. Through initiatives such as these, it is our hope that we are taking another step towards our future goal of complete cultural competency in health care practice. Lastly, there is an e-book located at the resource box underneath that comprehensively summarizes cultural competence for Hispanics in America. It has about a hundred pages and provides in-depth look at the varying aspects of healthcare for Hispanics and Mexican Americans. Thanks you for taking the time to look over this webquest and we hope this was beneficial in helping you develop professionally and broadened your cultural awareness.

Thanks, Christie Aizen, Stacy Desrouilleres, Daniel Dipetrillo, &nbsp;Alison Furman, Dhanya James, Jenin John, Anthony Kallini, Decorntae Kpou, Victoria Lee, Samantha Mack, Kevin Mukalel, Jessica Murcia, &nbsp;Christine Toepfer and Christopher Yang

Webquest Coordinator- Decorntae Kpou, Stacy Desrouilleres
Hot List Coordinator- All students contributed to organizing and directing robust hot list
Hot List Developer- Jessica Murcia, Christine Toepfer, Christie Aizen, Kevin Mukalel, Alison Furman, Decorntae, Stacy, Jenin John, Dhanya James, Victoria Lee, Samantha Mack
Graphics Director- Christopher Yang
Rubric Designers- N/A. A quiz was done instead of a rubric
Showme App (how to make a webquest)- Daniel Dipetrillo, Anthony Kallini

All students are full time occupational therapy students at the University of the Sciences.