

Chapter 6

INTERCULTURAL APPROACH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY PRACTICES

Hale TOSUN¹
Sibel YÜCETÜRK²

INTRODUCTION

The current multicultural situation in Turkish society has become more important in recent years with the increase of migration from neighbouring countries. Certain beliefs of migrants regarding family, child-rearing practices, and health and disease roles are among the issues that need to be addressed. Before giving culturally correct care, the professional must have knowledge of individual differences and similarities⁽¹⁾. The health needs of individuals with different cultural characteristics also differ. Individuals should be allowed to express their cultural assets, their values should be respected and care should be given accordingly⁽²⁾. The patient's cultural values, beliefs and practices are the most important steps in a holistic approach to the patient⁽³⁾. In the intercultural care approach, nurses and midwives face various barriers.

For this reason, in this review, the obstacles in the development of intercultural sensitivities of nurses and midwives and the problems experienced while caring for individuals from different cultures and solutions to these are explained.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Factors Affecting Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity is a part of intercultural communication skills and it is defined as “the active desire that is required for providing one's motivation in understanding, accepting and appreciating intercultural differences”⁽⁴⁾. There are various obstacles to the development of cultural sensitivity in nurses and midwives. Caregivers' view their culture as the best culture affects the beliefs and value judgments of the individuals receiving care. Cultural values of the caregiver and the patient may not match each other. Nurses and midwives may have miscon-

¹ Asst. Prof. Dr., University of Health Sciences, hale.tosun@sbu.edu.tr

² Instructor, Ondokuz Mayıs University, sibel.yuceturk@omu.edu.tr

They should be able to reconcile cultural beliefs with the general state of health provision and keep in mind the fact that professionally accurate information may differ from the patient's truth ^(19,20). It has been observed that nurses/midwives' feelings of compassion and empathy and intercultural sensitivity affect each other directly. For this reason, it is necessary to increase the cultural perspective of the employees and increase their awareness of this issue through in-service training ^(21,22). In addition to interacting with cultural experiences and characteristics, health professionals with cultural competence adopt patient care and direct their practices accordingly ^(23,24).

Conclusion

A holistic approach is important to provide better quality care to individuals. For this reason, nurses and midwives should be unbiased, respectful and tolerant towards individuals with different cultures and health beliefs. This approach is also a prerequisite for appropriate individualized care. Nurses and midwives face many problems when providing intercultural care. Among these problems, communication problems are the most prominent. Both health professionals and institutions should fulfil their duties to solve this problem.

In this context, it is very important for nurses and midwives to have the competence of intercultural care and to make efforts to increase their awareness in concerning increasing the quality of health care services.

Keywords: Intercultural approach; midwifery; nursing

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