

Need for Nursing Cultural Diversity Education Identified



According to a report by Nurse.com, cultural competency and an understanding of healthcare perspectives from different cultures is becoming a critical need for nurses.

As Susan Olson, R.N., a staff nurse and coordinator of service excellence at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, New Jersey explains, hospitals today are a melting pot of different cultures and different relations. She highlights the need for a greater understanding of different cultural groups that seek medical care at hospitals. For this purpose, Olson organised a Diversity Awareness Day at the medical center which was attended by more than 400 staff members. A resource guide was also prepared and posted on the hospital's intranet.

The report points out that nurses need to be more open and sensitive to cultural differences and religious and sexual preferences. They also need to understand that different patients have different attitudes about healthcare, family involvement, rituals surrounding birth and death, and beliefs about the causes of illness. There are certain cultures that do not feel comfortable revealing their level of pain while there are others like Muslim cultures where women prefer to be treated by female healthcare providers and so on.

While understanding of cultural diversity is imperative for nurses, this education is not limited to nurses alone. Another report says that medical schools should provide training in cultural competency to future physicians so that they are better able to serve patients. Hospitals should also take steps to establish programs that focus on the needs of ethnic groups. A guide to better deal with such issues was created in 2013 by the American Hospital Association titled "The Equity of Care Initiative."

It is important to remember that diversity is not limited to ethnic or religious differences but now includes sexual orientation and gender identification. Another recent study reports that there are very few healthcare providers that are trained or equipped to deal with LGBT patient needs and requirements.

Source: Nurse.com

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