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# Contemporary Challenges in Transcultural Nursing

## TRANSCULTURAL ASPECTS OF PAIN

# Objectives

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*After successful completion of this course,  
participants will be able to:*

- 1- Define pain and describe various pain types.
- 2- Identify Cultural Issues affecting pain
- 3- To discuss ,Race, Ethnicity, and the Treatment of Pain

# Definition

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- "Pain is whatever the experiencing person says it is, existing whenever he says it does."

McCaffery (1979)

- Pain is a universal affliction that affects all of us at some point in our lives. Practically all hospitalized patients experience pain at some point during their stay.

# Definition .....cont

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- an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience arising from actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage.

*U.S. Department of Health and  
Human Services, 1992*

1. An unpleasant feeling caused by injury or disease of the body.
2. Mental suffering.
3. [old use] punishment e.g. on pain of death

# Defintion .....cont

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- ❑ In Greek, the word used most often for physical pain is (**algos**), which derives from roots indicating **neglect of love**.
- ❑ Another Greek word is (**akos**) meaning 'psychic pain' from which we derive the English 'ache
- ❑ Implicit in these meanings is a broader definition of pain than the narrowly defined

# Defintion .....cont

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Definitions of pain are diverse because of its complex nature and because of the many different existing perspectives on pain.

- ❑ Pain is a universally recognized phenomenon and the most frequent compelling reason for seeking health care.
- ❑ Pain is a very private experience and is influenced by cultural heritage.
- ❑ Thus, expectations, manifestations and management of pain are embedded in a cultural context. Therefore, understanding culture is critical when dealing with clients in pain

## Defintion .....cont

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The experience of pain is determined by the:

- meaning of painful stimuli for individuals;
- way individuals define their situation; and,
- impact of previous personal experiences help determine the experience of pain.

# Cultural Issues

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- ❑ People from different cultures experience pain largely based on their meaning of pain.
- ❑ Be aware of your own cultural uniqueness and seek to accept the distinct perspectives of others.
- ❑ It is often difficult for you to be knowledgeable about all of the possible cultural norms of patients. However, you can be alert to the patient's verbal and non-verbal cues
- ❑ A careful approach to the patient in these instances will often set the stage for successful pain management



# Pain as a Biopsychosocial Phenomenon

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Research on the biology and neurobiology of pain has given us new ways to think about and manage pain, and is paralleled by research into the cultural, psychological, and social factors related to the experience of pain and its expression, behavioral responses, health care seeking, and receptivity to and adherence to treatment.

# Race, Ethnicity, and the Treatment of Pain

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- ❑ **Race** has been an especially important factor in the experience and treatment of pain
- ❑ **culture** of individual rights that ultimately included the right to health and health care, and most recently, pain care.
- ❑ **racial groups** varied in their physiological experiences to pain, with women, whites, and the rich being more sensitive to pain than African Americans, criminals, and Native Americans,

# Cont.

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Pain behavior, or in staff perception and treatment of patients' pain.

Recent evidence suggests that the most important variable in the under treatment of minority pain may be differences in staff perception of patients' pain intensity which may be based on myth lack of empathy stigma, or outright discrimination.

# Several factors affect how closely an individual identifies with his or her ethnic or cultural group ..... These include

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1. gender,
2. age,
3. generation,
4. level of acculturation,
5. socioeconomic status (including income, occupation, and education),
6. level of ties to the mother country,
7. primary language spoken at home,
8. degree of isolation of the individual, and residence in neighborhoods made up of one's ethnic group.

**These** factors may mediate the relationship between ethnic background and pain.

# Narrative, Culture, and Pain

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culture of pain and culture in pain.

The culture of pain describes the ways in which society shapes the meaning and treatment of pain.

culture in pain addresses the ways in which culture molds individuals' perception and expression of pain, and their coping response,

# JCAHO Standards

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## Recognize rights of patients in appropriate pain assessment and management.

- Screen for the presence and assess the nature and intensity of pain in ALL patients.
- Record the results of assessment in a way that facilitates regular reassessment of the pain.
- Determine and ensure staff competency in pain assessment and management and address assessment and management of pain in all new clinical staff.

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Establish policies and procedures that support the prescribing and ordering of pain medications.

- ☐ Ensure pain does not interfere with a patient's rehabilitation.
- ☐ Educate patients and families about the importance of effective pain management

# Cont,

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Address patient's need for symptom management in the discharge planning process.

□ Incorporate pain management into performance review activities (i.e. establish a means of collecting data to monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of pain management).



# Measurement of Pain

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- In terms of pain measurement, it is generally believed that humans normally experience similar pain thresholds. Research suggests that there are no differences in the amount of stimulation needed to produce a detectable sensation.

# The mnemonic, PQRST

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**Radiation:** Does the pain radiate to another body part?

**Quality:** Describe the pain. Is it burning, shooting, aching, stabbing, crushing, etc?

**Provocative or Palliative:** What makes the pain better or worse?

**Severity:** On a scale of 0-10, (10 being the worst) how bad is your pain? (may use other scales also)

**Timing:** Does it occur in association with something else? (i.e. eating, exertion, movement)

# Measurement of Pain ... .. cont,

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Measurement of pain would differ in *pain threshold*, *pain tolerance*

- **Pain Threshold** - refers to the point at which the individual reports that a stimulus is painful. For example, some people required higher intensities before describing the stimuli as painful.
- **Pain Tolerance** - is the point at which the individual withdraws or asks to have the stimulus stopped. Cultural background appears to have a strong influence on pain tolerance levels.

# Therapeutic approaches to chronic pain

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## Somatic-Technical

Pain = organic, time is the only distinction made between acute and chronic.

Treatment = surgical procedures to eradicate, block or ease pain, long-term use of narcotics

Cured = disappearance of symptoms

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# Cont.

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## 2. Dualistic Body-Orientated

Pain= mix organic, psychological and social factors.

Treatment= supposedly no distinction between body and mind, focus on nociceptive (i.e. the purely sensory)

Cure= pain is gone.

# Cont.

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## Behaviorists

Pain = chronic, intractable, 'pain behaviour separate from acute pain.

Treatment = behaviour management

Cure = pain behaviour replaced by effective 'well behaviour

# Cont.

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## Phenomenological

Pain= complex of reactions and behaviours, result of an interrupted healing process, pain sufferer is unable to find a place in the world.

# Cont.

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## 5. Consciousness

Pain=incorporated into the meaning of being human'

Therapy= unspecific, may be any form of treatment but preferably not invasive surgery

Recovery=by pain disappearing or by gaining enough insight to accept and manage it



# What Clients Need to Know

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**Among the skills they need to learn are to:**

**control stress**

**develop self-control**

**stop external control of others or by other**

**seek help for problems**

**develop new behaviors**

**stop isolation**

**set goals**

**have fun without an altered state or guilt**



# Expressions of Pain,

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- Expressions of pain vary from culture to culture. What are appropriate verbal behavior and body language in response to pain are dictated by culture. Example: the Japanese culture does not approve of loud verbal expressions of pain.
- Within each culture, expressions of pain may vary from person to person. How people express their pain is strongly influenced by their level of assimilation and acculturation.
- In relation to gender - men demonstrate greater stoicism than women. However, stoicism decreases with increasing age. (Zatzick & Dimsdale, 1990)

# Transcultural Food behaviors

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Why ... ..

- ☐ Survival
- ☐ Sense of belonging
- ☐ Self realization

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## How ... ..

- ❑ Regarding etiquette, meal and sank patterns, acceptable food, food combinations, proper sizes
- ❑ Etiquette refers to acceptable behavior
- ❑ Etiquette and eating rituals also vary depending on whether the meal is formal, informal or special

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What ..... ..

Any thing that moved can be eaten ?

What are the influence of food choice ?

Cultural , social, religious, economic ,  
environmental, political influences

# Cross cultural etiquette

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Seating

Eating

Body language

Conversation

Food

Home / restaurant

# Universal functions and uses of foods

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- ❑ **Food for biophysical needs:** to provide essential nutritional needs to help people maintain body functions and energy and survive. If infants and adults do not get sufficient basic food nutrients, signs of nutritional deficiencies, illnesses, inability to function, and even death occur. E.g. kwashiorkor, caused by a protein-scarce diet.
- ❑ every culture over time has developed what they believe are essential and preferred foods in their diet and also have patterned ways to prepare foods for children and adults.

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- ❑ **foods for human relationships:** in establishing and maintaining social and cultural relationships with friends, kinfolk, strangers, and others . food is a symbol to indicate special social and cultural patterns and to test or maintain relation ships. E.g. a ritual beverage break often serve as more than a nourishment or rest break.
  - ❑ Food has, a universal functions in all ceremonies and cultures for prestige, to exchange wealth, and to renew bonds of friendship, solidarity, and religious functions.



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- ❑ **Food to assess interpersonal distance:**  
to assess social relationships or interpersonal closeness or distance between people. Transculturally and universally food use often reflects the social stratification of society and indicates which persons are to be respected or held in positions of higher authority or status.

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- ❑ Food to cope with stress and conflict; using food for coping with emotional stress conflicts, and traumatic life events.
  - ❑ Canadians, and Australians often rely on eating to relieve their stresses and in ways they may not be fully aware of until weight gain occur.

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- ❑ **Food for rewards and punishment:** rewarding children for good behavior are often by some kind of sweet.
  - ❑ **Food to influence status:** universal function of food is to influence the political and economic status of an individual or group. Serving food before, during, and after political meetings often leads to friendly and congenital outcome. Foods tends to soften political group behavior and ease questionable relationships.

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- ❑ **Foods to treat and prevent illness:** in many cultures food remains important to prevent and cure certain illnesses such as hypertension, D/M, peptic ulcers, coronary diseases, aging, and other conditions or disorders.
  - ❑ **Generic food theories and uses:** the hot and cold theory in non western countries and in ancient Greece with the desire to balance body fluids or humors between perceived hot and cold substances .

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- ❑ **Cultural preferences:** eating culturally desired foods can lead to a quicker recovery from illness and greater client satisfaction than when these clients are expected to eat strange or taboo food. Today , hospital staff need to be educated about cultural food likes and dislikes through in-service education and academic courses on Transcultural nutrition and health care.
  - ❑ **Environmental influences:** nurse knowledge about the peoples environment with an understanding of what foods are raised or available is important as one counsels clients about food resources and uses.