Perceptions of Nurse Practitioner Students on the Delivery of Culturally Congruent Care to Mexican Immigrants

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Purpose: Although nurse practitioners are at the forefront in providing safe, cost-effective, culturally congruent care to vulnerable Mexican immigrants, the cultural values and practices of these patients are not always understood or effectively incorporated into their treatment recommendations. The purpose of this study was to investigate nurse practitioner students' perceptions of culture and its role in the delivery of culturally congruent care to vulnerable Mexican immigrants residing in rural communities located along the Texas-Mexico border.

Methods: An exploratory descriptive design employing grounded theory and purposive sampling was utilized for this study. The selected participants consisted of twenty-five nurse practitioner students, nineteen females and six males, enrolled either full-time (32%) or part-time (68%) in a university school of nursing family nurse practitioner program and had completed at least half of their required coursework. Nineteen identified their ethnicity as either Mexican or Mexican-American and were fluent in both English and Spanish. Prior to entering the nursing program, they had worked an average of 7.5 years as a professional nurse. Their practice experience included acute care, home care, and community or rural health care. All were experienced in providing nursing care to low-income Mexican immigrants. The study included a demographic questionnaire and a ten-item semi-structured interview created by the researchers to elicit thoughtful reflection on the participants' perceptions of culture and its role in the delivery of culturally congruent care to Mexican immigrants. Face-to-face interviews were conducted by an experienced research cohort in a setting and location of the participants' choosing that provided privacy and minimized the potential for interruption. The interview data was reported anonymously and analyzed qualitatively via a constant comparison method.

Results: Data analysis involved grouping of response similarities until no new categories emerged. Affinity among the categories resulted in linkage into four distinct core categories or emerging themes: Culturally congruent care 1) extends beyond race and ethnicity; 2) recognizes the importance of dietary patterns, food choices, and perceptions of ideal weight and health; 3) accepts complementary and alternative medical modalities as time-honored customs; 4) understands the importance of communication in the development of a therapeutic relationship. These themes provided a summary of what nurse practitioner students caring for a vulnerable Mexican population perceived as culture and its role in the delivery of culturally congruent care.

Conclusion: This study highlights the importance of advanced practice nurse educators' role and responsibilities in assisting nurse practitioner students in moving beyond thoughtful action to critically evaluating their own cultural heritage, values, beliefs, and practices in relation to others who share similarities and differences in their values, beliefs, and practices. Such reflective thinking can prepare family nurse practitioner students for providing culturally congruent care directed towards promoting health among vulnerable Mexican immigrants. While the results of this study were restricted to examining their perceptions of low-income Mexican immigrants living in rural communities along the Texas-Mexico border, the results of this study can serve as an important complement to other studies. This study can also serve as a guide to enhancing cultural competency at the graduate level and may improve nurse practitioners' efforts in addressing the social and cultural context surrounding the health needs among similar and different minority populations across the globe.
Title:
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Keywords:
Culturally Congruent Care, Culture and Nurse Practitioner Students

References:


Abstract Summary:
This exploratory descriptive study investigates nurse practitioner students' perceptions of culture and its role in the delivery of culturally congruent care to vulnerable Mexican immigrants residing in rural communities located along the Texas-Mexico border.

Content Outline:
I. Introduction

A. Provide an overview of the Mexican immigrant population located along the Texas-Mexico border.

B. Discuss the key role that nurse practitioners play in providing safe, cost-effective culturally congruent care to low-income Mexican immigrant clients.

C. Discuss the need to prepare nurse practitioner students in providing culturally congruent care to vulnerable Mexican immigrant clients, families, communities, and populations while avoiding bias or stereotyping.

II. Body

A. Providing culturally congruent care necessitates acting in sensitive and knowledgeable ways that are fitting to the cultural beliefs, values, and lifestyles of clients, families, or communities.

B. Improvements in graduate nursing curricula with the objective of developing nurse practitioners as leaders proficient in providing culturally congruent care begins with an assessment of how nurse practitioner students perceive the nature of culture when caring for Mexican immigrant clients.

C. Discovering cultural commonalities as well as differences between family nurse practitioner students and their perspectives on providing culturally congruent care can provide us with unique insights and a better understanding of the values, beliefs, and practices that influence the health of Mexican immigrant clients.

III. Methodology

A. An exploratory descriptive design guided by Leininger’s theory of Culture Care: Diversity and Universality was appropriate for this study.

B. Purposive sampling was used to select twenty-five predominately Mexican-American family nurse practitioner students.

C. Semi-structured interviews developed by the researchers were conducted by an experienced research cohort.

IV. Results

A. Data analysis involved grouping of response similarities into content-related categories until no new categories emerged.

B. Affinity among categories resulted in linkage into four distinct emerging themes: Cultural congruent care 1) extends beyond race and ethnicity; 2) recognizes the influence of dietary patterns, food choices, and perceptions of ideal weight on health; 3) accepts the use of lay healers and herbal supplements as time-honored complementary or alternative medical modalities; 4) acknowledges the importance of communication in the development of a therapeutic relationship.

V. Conclusions

A. This study highlights the importance of advanced practice nursing educators’ role and responsibilities in assisting nurse practitioner students in moving beyond thoughtful action to critically evaluating their
own cultural values, beliefs, and practices in relation to others who share similarities or differences in their values, beliefs, and practices.

B. The results of this study help bridge the gaps between nursing theory and practice.

C. This study can serve as a guide to enhancing cultural competency at the graduate level.

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**Author Summary:** Dr. Eanes is an experienced nurse educator and has developed expertise in nursing curricula, issues affecting nursing practice, and nursing research. She is also acutely aware that nurses across the globe must respond to the changing demographics and be prepared to provide culturally congruent care to vulnerable individuals, families, communities, and populations while avoiding bias or stereotyping.