CULTURAL BIASES IN HEALTHCARE

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We have no disclosures.
Objectives

• Become aware of your own thoughts about the variety of differences of the people with whom we interact.
• Define culture and bias.
• Discuss the impact of cultural bias on health outcomes.
Agree or Disagree?

- I know my own mind.
- I am able to assess others in a fair and accurate way.
Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another.

— Geert Hofstede —
Cultural Layers, Cognitive Associations and Conflict

- Family
- Age
- Personal Experiences
- Recreational Habits
- Religion
- Organizations
- Profession
- Language
- Income
- Geography
- Neighborhood
- Gender/Sexual Identity
- Appearance
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Ethnicity

Ammunition

Misunderstandings

Prejudice
Bias

• A process where you prefer one thing over another thing.
  – Find order, group things, create structure
  – Efficiently move from analysis to action
Hidden - Unconscious - Implicit Bias

• A process where you *unknowingly* prefer one thing over another thing
• Implicit Associations
How are prejudices, biases, and stereotypes like bugs?

“Mindbugs”
Equal

Justice (Fair, Equitable)
Language and Actions Reveal Mindbugs-Prejudice, Bias and Stereotypes

• “Immigrants don’t want to learn English.”
• “I don’t think of you as black anymore.”
• “Typical white male”
• “Statistics show that most criminals are black men, so be ready for Code Yellow.”
• “You are too young to understand.”
• “Smells like poverty.”
• “Let Jen work the holiday. She’s single; she doesn’t have family.”
THE IMPACT OF IMPLICIT BIAS ON PATIENT HEALTH OUTCOMES
What Triggers Our Bias?

- Non-compliance
- Names
- Language/accent
- Literacy
- Financial status
- Age
- Weight
- Drug or alcohol use
- Smoking
- Pain
- Physical Disability
- Piercings
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Tattoos
- Hygiene habits
- Personality type
- Food choices
- Assertiveness/Passiveness
- Mental Health Concerns
Your Bias is Showing...

- Behavior
- Communication
- Clinical Decisions
Implicit Behaviors

- Greater physical distance between self and others
- Less eye contact
- Increased rate of blinking
- Decreased number of smiles
- Shorter length of encounter
Dominant tone of voice
Less positive affect
Uninformed/stereotypical conversation choices
Increased speed of speech
Talking with a fake accent/or using incorrect grammar
Implicit Clinical Decisions

- Lower referrals to specialists
- Less likely to recommend preferred treatment
- Poor pain management
- Delayed treatment
- Delayed response of staff
Impact of Cultural Bias

- Distrust in healthcare
- Decrease adherence to prescribed treatment
- Lower reported understanding of instructions
- Decreased confidence in care provided
- Further exacerbation of health care disparities
- Perception of discrimination/racism
- Lower patient satisfaction
True Story...

“I am black, my Mother In Law (MIL) is white. My son was in the hospital for 6 days. My MIL never left our side. All but 1 person talked to her... updated her... comforted her during this stay... I was devastated. They barely even acknowledged me, his mother!”
True Story...

“My family is Jewish. Every time we go to the doctors during the holidays everyone asks about Christmas or Santa. I quickly inform them that we are Jewish. It gets awkward after that.”

Photo courtesy of Steve Hardy on Flickr
“I walked in and introduced myself. ‘Hi, I’m...’

(Interrupted by family member of patient.)

“They already cleaned our room.”

“That’s nice, I’m Dr. Gomez.”
“My 14 year old daughter was giving birth to my 1st grandchild. I was not happy about it but I was determined to get her through it. Everything went well. My grandbaby was born the nurse kept trying to teach me how to take care of the baby. I told her to teach my daughter not me. The nurse told me ‘Well we know who will be taking care of the child’ in a very snotty voice.”

Photo courtesy of MabyCakes on Flikr
“The staff member walked up to the desk and individually asked everyone at the desk except for me ‘Are you caring for the patient in room ABC.’ I sat there and didn’t make a sound. They never asked me. Then they picked up the phone list to call the nurse... It was me. I answered the phone in my most professional voice.”
“More Bias...More Problems”
Our Response to the Patient who Displays Bias

- Identify the behavior
- Seek facts
- Explore their perspective
- Address fears and answer questions
- Use your resources
Tips for Reducing Your Bias

• Acknowledge the existence of bias in healthcare

• Explore your personal bias

• Be aware of your patients’ biases, concerns and experiences

• Seek commonalities between you and your patients

• Respect differences

• Adhere to best practice

• Make a conscious decision to improve
Questions?
References


References


Link for IAT
“Nothing will work unless you do.”
-Maya Angelou

Thank you!
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