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## Cultural Competence—Working With Immigrant Worker Populations

*“Will You Recognize Pig Brain Inhalation Syndrome?”*


NECOEM/MaAOHN Annual Conference  
December 5, 2008  
Bedford, MA

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## Outline


- Basic Definitions
- Basic Tools
- Case Study
- Resources



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## Culture

A specific set of social, educational, religious, and professional behaviors, practices, and values that individuals learn and adhere to while participating in or out of groups they usually interact with.



Durham et al, 1997

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## Cultural Competency

The knowledge and interpersonal skills that allow providers to understand, appreciate, and work with individuals from cultures other than their own. It involves an awareness and acceptance of cultural differences; self-awareness; knowledge of the patient's culture; and adaptation of skills.




Culturally Competent Healthcare for Adolescents  
AMA, 1994

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## Three Components of Cultural Competence

- Self-Awareness
  - Recognition of our own biases
- Knowledge
  - Recognition and appreciation of cultural differences
- Skills
  - Ability to ask the right questions and engage the person in communicating his or her cultural values



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## Self-Awareness


- 42 year old Hispanic male, arrived into the United States “undocumented” at age 19 as a migrant farmworker.
- 24 year old white female graduated from Yale at age 21 daughter of physician mother and lawyer father.
- 17 year old African American female with one child age 6 months

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## Self-Awareness

Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa  
MD  
Assistant Professor of  
Neurological Surgery and  
Oncology  
Johns Hopkins School of  
Medicine

“Of course I would be honored if you use my name in your presentation.”



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## Self-Awareness

“Mary” has had substance abuse problems since her early teenage years. Presents to you for pre-employment PE following her recent discharge from her third Drug/Alcohol Rehab for chronic meth-amphetamine addiction. She is HIV and HepC positive.

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## Self-Awareness

“Nakisha” will be graduating from an inner-city high school in NYC this May as the Valedictorian of her class. She has scored 1540 on her SATs and has a full scholarship to Harvard in the fall.

Her pregnancy was the result of a rape when she was 15.

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## Definitions

- Cultural Knowledge
  - Familiarization with selected cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems and behaviors of the members of another ethnic group.
- Cultural Awareness
  - Developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group. Usually involves internal changes in terms of attitudes and values.

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## Cultural Diversity


- Between and within.
- Primary diversity: nationality, race, color, gender, age, religion.
- Secondary diversity: education, occupation, marital status, parental status, geographic locale, etc.



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## Cultural Sensitivity

Knowing that cultural differences as well as similarities exist, without assigning values to those differences.



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## CONFHER


- Communication Style
- Orientation
- Nutrition
- Family relationships
- Health Beliefs
- Education
- Religion



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## Skills


- Explanatory model
- Working with interpreters



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## Explanatory Model


- Patient/Client centered
- Doesn't require exhaustive knowledge
- Recognizes individuality
- Allows cultural humility
- Allows collaboration and negotiation



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## Sample Questions for Explanatory Model


- What do you think is causing your illness?
- What have you done to treat this?
- Have you asked anyone else to help you?
- Do you have an explanation for why it started when it did?
- What does your sickness do to you; how does it work?
- What kind of treatment do you think you should receive?



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## Sample Questions for Explanatory Model


- What do you call your problem?
- How long do you think it will last?
- Do any foods, drinks or medicines from home help you?
- What advice or help to you get from family, friends, or other healers?
- How are you raising your children? Like you were raised? How are you doing it differently?
- Does your faith or religion affect your health?



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## Translation and Interpretation

- Translation—written
- Interpretation—oral
- Plan ahead
- Avoid jargon or technical terms
- Ask one question at a time
- Think of several ways to restate



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## Interpretation

**Interpretation Dos:**

- Have interpreter sit beside and slightly behind patient
- Establish “ground rules” with interpreter before patient interview
- Speak directly to the patient not to the interpreter
- Use professional medical interpreters whenever possible or:
  - Bilingual Trained staff member
  - Language line
  - Other unrelated bilingual individual (only in emergencies)




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## Interpretation

**Interpretation Don'ts**


- Do not use family, especially children!
- Make sure interpreter is “qualified”
- Do not speak directly to the interpreter
- Body language is of great importance—be sensitive to possible cultural differences (some cultures do not appreciate “looking you in the eye”)



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## Communication Skills

- Do not rely on brochures
- Don't shout
- Avoid slang or jargon
- Encourage questions
- Pay attention to nonverbal cues
- Respect privacy, modesty



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## Encounters in Context


- Impatience and annoyance may be your signal of an intercultural misunderstanding
- Personal questions asked of you by a patient may reflect a cultural need for trust and reassurance
- If patients repeat your instructions in exact form, there is a likelihood they do not understand. Rephrase and ask for recapitulation
- Hesitation may indicate you've hit a cultural wall
- Try to treat the way the patient likes to be treated rather than the way you like to be treated—be flexible

Rena Gropper, 1996

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## “Pig Brain Inhalation Syndrome?” (Progressive Inflammatory Neuropathy--PIN)

- Quality Pork Processors
- Southern Minnesota
- 1,300 employees
- 14 individuals with new neurological disease (3 states)
- Work related?
- All worked near area where “blowing brains”
- Only 3 plants use technique
- Several workers consulted company nurse—actions??
- Interpreter reported to physician that she had heard the “same story” by three patients



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## Progressive Inflammatory Neuropathy--PIN)

Could have been a lot more imaginative and called it:

### Progressive Inflammatory Global-neuropathy Syndrome

**PIGS**

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### Pesticide Related Congenital Abnormality in Farmworker Women

- Florida and North Carolina
- Women exposed to pesticides in the field during 1<sup>st</sup> trimester of pregnancy
- Found to have severe congenital abnormalities
- Outreach workers made the connection and informed health clinic staff



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### Use Local Resources

- Migrant and Community Health Centers (M/CHC)
  - Have bilingual staff/providers who work with population
  - Have outreach workers/promotoras
  - Have trained medical interpreters
- Faith-based Community Organizations
- Other community organizations

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### Migrant Clinicians Network—EPA

- “Saving Lives By Changing Practices: Integrating Occupational and Environmental Medicine into the Primary Care Setting” EPA funded grant
- Attempt to better integrate occupational/environmental health providers with primary care providers
- Pilot programs have begun in 4 states and Puerto Rico

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### Impact of Cultural Competency

- More appropriate testing and screening
- Fewer diagnostic and clerical errors
- Avoidance of drug complications
- Greater adherence to advice
- Increase in health/education seeking behavior
- Successful patient/client education
- Expanded choices of service locations
- Reduced provider/employer liability
- Reduced disparities in health/educational outcomes



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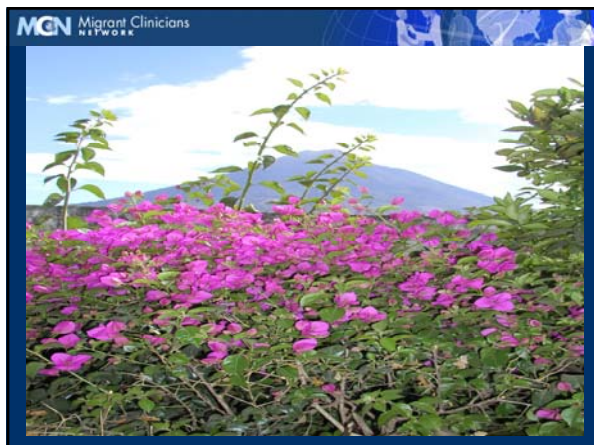
## Resources

- The Provider's Guide to Quality and Culture: <http://ecu.msh.org> (HRSA)
- Alternative medicine: [www.altmedicine.org](http://www.altmedicine.org), [www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov)
- Migrant Clinicians Network: [www.migrantclinician.org](http://www.migrantclinician.org)

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## Resources, Cont'd

- *Culture and the Clinical Encounter*, Rena Gropper, 1996 (207-846-5168)
- *Communicating Effectively Through an Interpreter* [www.xculture.org](http://www.xculture.org)
- [Lepactionkit@accessproject.org](mailto:Lepactionkit@accessproject.org)
- [www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)



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