

Article Review Project

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**Articles:**

1. African American Cancer Survivors: Do Cultural Factors Influence Symptom Distress?
2. Humanitarian Nursing in Developing Countries: A Phenomenological Analysis.
3. Integrating a Geographic Information System into Nursing Research: Potentials and Challenges.
4. Nurses Leading the Fight Against Ebola Virus Disease.
5. Beyond Strain: Personal Strengths and Mental Health of Mexican and Argentinian Dementia Caregivers.

Jane Finney, Jill Hamilton, Eric Hodges, Bosny Pierre-Louis, Jamie Crandell, and Hyman Muss.

“African American Cancer Survivors: Do Cultural Factors Influence Symptom Distress?” *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*. 2014; 26; 294-300.

Due to “limited access to care, more advanced stages of disease, increased comorbidities, and more severe treatment-related symptoms” (Finney et al., 2014), the African American population suffers from the highest cancer death rate and the lowest survival rate of all groups in the US. In this article, the authors examined how factors of culture such as stigma, strength, and religion affect the symptoms of African American cancer patients. They did this by having a sample of African American cancer survivors complete a questionnaire that assessed their illness characteristics, perceived stigma, religious involvement, symptom distress, and ways of helping. They found that the only two factors that had an impact on symptom distress were stigma and organized religion. The information given in this article can benefit healthcare providers and others who work with multicultural populations because it tells a lot about how African Americans perceive cancer and what affects their long-term treatments.

What I learned from the article is that my culture deals with illness very differently than others. I had always assumed that the way that disease was dealt with was consistent across cultures, but I found this to be false. In my future career as a nurse, I will be aware of the cultural differences in how individuals cope with diseases such as cancer, and this knowledge will help me provide the highest quality of care that I possibly can. I believe that cultural competency is among the most important traits that a nurse can possess because without an understanding of other cultures, one runs the risk of offending the patient and giving them a lower quality of care than they deserve.

Shane Lal and Deb Spence. "Humanitarian Nursing in Developing Countries: A Phenomenological Analysis" *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*. 2014; 1-7.

The goal of this article is to inform readers of the need for better prepared nurses when it comes to travelling to developing countries to provide humanitarian aid. This claim is based on interviews of nurses who went to various third world countries and treated patients. According to the article, humanitarian nurses need to have skills such as previous experience, preparedness and professional confidence. In the interviews, the nurses describe their experiences in humanitarian nursing care. One of the main issues that they had with it was feeling anxious. This was due to the fact that there were culture and language barriers that made nursing care difficult. In war torn areas, tensions were high and the nurses found themselves in dangerous and potentially life threatening situations, making their anxiety worse as well. Due to unreliable equipment, insufficient supplies, and even cultural differences, the humanitarian nurses had to practice differently, which was another issue for them. They were not used to the limited resources and had to improvise on many occasions. The final main issue was adjusting to life back home. When the nurses returned to their jobs, the hardships in the developing countries stayed with them as they adjusted to being back.

This article demonstrates the importance of cultural competency in nursing. It needs to be taught early in nursing programs, so that students understand that healthcare in America is much different than that of developing countries. I can use this information in my future career to remind me that I am very fortunate to be working in a facility where I have everything provided for me. Perhaps someday, I will take my talents in nursing overseas to help patients in developing countries who need educated nurses.

Jehad Rababah, Andrew Curtis, and Barbara Drew. "Integrating a Geographic Information System into Nursing Research: Potentials and Challenges" *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*. 2014; 19; 1-6.

In this article, Geographic Information System (GIS) is defined as "a sophisticated, spatial software that allows for combining different types of data including, but not limited to, demographics, health data, and community resources, all connected by an underlying map" (Rababah, Curtis & Drew, 2014). The purpose of the article was to give examples of how GIS can be used to research certain phenomena in nursing. Examples of this are the study of heart disease mortality and hospital access, breast cancer and pesticide exposure, and clusters of opioid abuse in New Mexico, to name a few. What this means for nursing research is that GIS can help nurses focus on environment, which is an important concept in nursing. In addition, it can be used to create and carry out hypothesis tests and it can benefit research that involves the effects of the environment on health related issues. According to the authors, there is "significant potential for using GIS to strengthen nursing research" (2014). Despite all of this, the article tells us that GIS is still in the beginning stages as a research method. However, it will continue to grow and benefit the healthcare field in many ways.

As far as the application of GIS in my future career, I am hopeful that whatever facility I work for will be striving to use this type of research method in order to know as much as possible about the patterns and trends in healthcare. I am interested in knowing about the things that impact our health, and if there are certain issues that can be stopped or prevented. I believe that it is important to understand how we interact with our environment, and I believe that this understanding is essential to nursing care.

Priscilla Sagar. "Nurses Leading the Fight Against Ebola Virus Disease" *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*. 2015; 26; 322-326.

The purpose of this article was to bring awareness to how critical nurses are in battling diseases such as Ebola. The article also sheds light on the fact that there is a serious shortage of nurses in underdeveloped countries. To show just how much of a shortage there is, a study in the article revealed that Sierra Leone, one of the countries devastated by the Ebola outbreak, has approximately 17 nurses for every 100,000 people. When compared to the United States, with approximately 782 nurses for every 100,000 people, it is easy to see that the country in need of the most nurses does not have enough to cover the devastation brought by the Ebola virus. (Sagar 2015). According to the article, the Ebola virus has a fatality rate of up to 90%. The reason why nurses are needed in the fight against this disease is because they are the largest population in the caregiving profession, providing up to 80% of health services. Nurses work closest with patients out of all the healthcare workers, and so they are especially at risk when it comes to outbreaks of deadly diseases like Ebola. There were a number of challenges that were brought about as a result of the Ebola virus. However, the American Academy of Nursing and the American Nurses Association came together and issued a statement that addressed these challenges. They stated that there would be updated information for healthcare workers and the public, a safe environment, a sufficient number of nurses, and monitoring of gaps that lead to disease transmission (Sagar 2015).

It is possible that a disease will break out in an area that I am working in someday, and I will benefit from knowing this information. I will be equipped to help those who need it, and I will know that I make a difference.

Megan Sutter, Paul Perrin, Silvina Victoria Peralta, Miriam Stolfi, Eliana Morelli, Leticia Aracely Peña Obeso, and Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla. "Beyond Strain: Personal Strengths and Mental Health of Mexican and Argentinean Dementia Caregivers" *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*. 2015; 1-9.

This article discusses the fact that "life expectancy is increasing in Latin America, resulting in the need for more family caregivers for older adults with dementia" (Sutter et al., 2015). In many Latin American countries, caring for older family members is rooted in the culture of the people. However, this may impact the mental health of the caregivers, and here's why. Dementia is a very difficult disease to manage, both for the patient and the caregiver. According to the article, dementia results in memory loss, communication breakdown, changes in mood/personality, poor judgement, and the eventual inability to recognize loved ones. (Sutter et al., 2015). Therefore, caring for someone with this type of condition can result in high levels of anxiety, along with feelings of depression and feeling like they are carrying a burden. The article discusses the hypothesis that "Incorporating strengths-based approaches into research on caregiver interventions in regions where caregiving is a highly culturally valued role such as Latin America may have the potential to improve the mental health of dementia caregivers" (Sutter et al., 2015).

What I learned from this article is that taking care of someone who has dementia is a very taxing responsibility, and it is becoming more and more common for American families to send their loved ones to a long term care facility when he/she gets to the point of needing 24 hour care. I work at a nursing home as a certified nursing assistant, so I can use the information about dementia to better understand the disease and be able to give my patients a higher quality of care.