

Forensic Nursing: Cultural Competence for Equity

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Abstract

This collection emphasizes the crucial role of cultural competence, humility, and sensitivity in forensic nursing. It highlights existing disparities in victim care outcomes due to inadequate cultural understanding and advocates for comprehensive training and policy changes. Integrating trauma-informed care and an intersectionality framework is essential for diverse populations. Educational interventions are vital for preparing nurses, while tailored approaches are necessary for vulnerable groups like refugees and sexual assault survivors. Ultimately, the goal is to foster equitable, patient-centered care, minimize re-traumatization, and improve engagement with forensic services.

Keywords

Cultural competence; cultural humility; forensic nursing; health disparities; trauma-informed care; victim care; nursing education; sexual assault; refugee care; intersectionality

Introduction

The critical need for cultural competence in forensic nursing is clearly established, as it directly impacts victim care outcomes. This systematic review synthesizes existing literature, identifying common themes and research gaps regarding culturally sensitive approaches for diverse populations experiencing trauma, advocating for comprehensive training and policy changes for equitable, patient-centered care [1].

This article argues for integrating trauma-informed care with cultural humility in forensic nursing practice. Victims from diverse backgrounds often present with compounded trauma, necessitating nurses to engage in active self-reflection and continuous learning

about different cultural perspectives. This approach fosters trust, reduces re-traumatization, and ultimately enhances the quality and effectiveness of care for survivors of violence [2].

Culturally sensitive care plays a vital role in mitigating health disparities prevalent in forensic populations, especially among victims of violence from marginalized communities. Understanding and respecting cultural beliefs, communication styles, and health practices are crucial for accurate assessment, effective intervention, and improved engagement within the justice system. Specific strategies are proposed for forensic nurses to integrate cultural sensitivity into their practice, pushing for systematic changes to tackle inequities [3].

Educational interventions are key to enhancing cultural competence among forensic nursing students. Structured programs, featuring diverse case studies and experiential learning, significantly improve students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to culturally sensitive victim care. It is important to integrate this training early in nursing curricula to prepare future forensic nurses for the complexities of serving diverse populations [4].

Cultural humility is paramount in forensic mental health nursing, going beyond basic cultural competence by promoting continuous self-reflection, openness, and recognizing power imbalances. This is crucial for building therapeutic relationships with diverse forensic patients, who frequently come from marginalized backgrounds and have intricate mental health needs. Embracing cultural humility can lead to more equitable and effective care, reducing bias and improving outcomes [5].

Studies reveal racial and ethnic disparities in how survivors of sexual assault access and perceive victim services. Survivors from minority groups often report lower satisfaction and face significant barriers to utilizing services, highlighting the urgent need for culturally tailored and equitable care. Forensic nursing, as a core component of victim services, must critically evaluate and adapt its methods to better address the distinct needs and cultural contexts of diverse populations to overcome these disparities [6].

Critical cultural considerations are necessary during forensic medical examinations for victims of sexual violence. Cultural beliefs, gender roles, and views on modesty can greatly influence a victim's willingness to undergo examination and disclose information. Forensic nurses need guidance to conduct examinations in a culturally sensitive manner, respecting privacy and autonomy, which is vital for minimizing secondary trauma and ensuring thorough evidence collection while prioritizing victim well-being [7].

Refugee and immigrant victims of violence present unique challenges and needs, underscoring the demand for culturally competent nursing care. These populations often contend with language barriers, mistrust of authorities, and differing concepts of health and trauma, which can hinder their access to and engagement with forensic services. Interpreter services, community partnerships, and culturally adapted interventions are essential for providing effective, compassionate care that respects their diverse backgrounds and experiences [8].

An intersectionality framework is proposed for understanding and enhancing cultural competence in forensic nursing education. Addressing diversity in victim care requires acknowledging the complex interplay of various social identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. These identities intersect to shape individuals' experiences of trauma and their interactions with the justice system. Educational strategies should move beyond a singular focus on culture to encompass these multifaceted dimensions of identity and power dynamics [9].

Strategies for improving cultural awareness among forensic nurses are vital for better serving sexual assault survivors from di-

verse backgrounds. Cultural factors profoundly influence a survivor's disclosure patterns, coping mechanisms, and willingness to engage with legal and medical systems. Targeted training programs, including cultural immersion, reflective practice, and the use of culturally specific resources, are recommended. This equips forensic nurses with the skills necessary to provide sensitive, effective, and ethical care, ultimately reducing secondary victimization [10].

Description

Forensic nursing stands at a pivotal juncture where cultural competence, humility, and sensitivity are not just beneficial, but absolutely critical for ensuring equitable and effective patient care. Research consistently shows that a lack of cultural understanding can lead to significant disparities in victim care outcomes, particularly for diverse populations experiencing trauma. Addressing these nuances requires more than just basic knowledge; it demands ongoing self-reflection and a commitment to continuous learning from forensic nurses [1, 2, 5]. Culturally sensitive care, by respecting varied cultural beliefs, communication styles, and health practices, is fundamental for accurate assessment and intervention, fostering better engagement within the justice system for marginalized communities [3].

The scope of culturally informed practice extends deeply into managing trauma and mental health within forensic populations. Victims from diverse backgrounds frequently experience compounded trauma, making a trauma-informed and culturally humble approach indispensable. This combination helps in building trust, minimizes the risk of re-traumatization, and crucially, enhances the overall quality of care for survivors of violence [2]. For forensic mental health nursing specifically, cultural humility is presented as an essential element that moves beyond competence. It encourages openness, active self-reflection, and a recognition of power imbalances, which are key for forging strong therapeutic relationships with patients who often come from marginalized backgrounds and present with complex mental health needs. This commitment to cultural humility ultimately reduces bias and improves outcomes for these vulnerable individuals [5].

Educational strategies are a cornerstone in preparing future forensic nurses for these complex demands. Evaluations of structured educational interventions show they significantly improve cultural competence among nursing students, particularly when incorporating diverse case studies and experiential learning. Integrating this training early into nursing curricula is crucial for equipping students with the necessary skills to navigate the diverse popula-

tions they will serve [4]. Further enhancing this educational foundation, an intersectionality framework is proposed, encouraging educators to acknowledge the intricate interplay of social identities such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. This broader perspective helps in understanding how these various dimensions shape an individual's experience of trauma and their interactions with the justice system, moving beyond a singular focus on culture to address multifaceted power dynamics and identity issues [9].

Specific populations, such as refugees, immigrants, and survivors of sexual assault, face unique barriers that necessitate highly specialized, culturally competent approaches. Refugee and immigrant victims often struggle with language barriers, a profound mistrust of authorities, and differing concepts of health and trauma, all of which can severely impede their access to and engagement with forensic services. The emphasis here is on providing interpreter services, establishing community partnerships, and developing culturally adapted interventions to deliver compassionate and effective care that honors their diverse backgrounds [8]. In the context of sexual assault, studies highlight racial and ethnic disparities in service utilization and satisfaction, indicating that minority survivors often face greater obstacles. Forensic nursing must adapt its services to address these unique needs, ensuring culturally tailored and equitable care [6]. Moreover, cultural factors significantly influence a sexual assault survivor's willingness to disclose information, their coping mechanisms, and their interaction with legal and medical systems. Targeted training programs, including cultural immersion and reflective practice, are essential to equip forensic nurses with the skills for sensitive, ethical, and effective care, thereby reducing secondary victimization [10].

Finally, the practical application of cultural sensitivity extends to critical procedures like forensic medical examinations for victims of sexual violence. Cultural beliefs, gender roles, and views on modesty can profoundly impact a victim's willingness to undergo examination and disclose crucial information. Guidance for forensic nurses on conducting examinations in a culturally sensitive manner, prioritizing privacy and autonomy, is paramount. This ensures both the minimization of secondary trauma and the thorough collection of evidence, all while keeping the victim's well-being at the forefront [7]. These insights collectively underscore the systemic imperative for forensic nursing to continually evolve its practices and educational frameworks to provide truly patient-centered care for all.

Conclusion

The field of forensic nursing faces a critical imperative to embrace cultural competence, humility, and sensitivity to effectively improve victim care outcomes and address prevalent health disparities. Existing literature reveals that current educational strategies and practice guidelines frequently fall short in equipping forensic nurses to navigate the diverse cultural nuances of populations experiencing trauma, potentially leading to inequities in care. Integrating trauma-informed care with cultural humility is paramount, requiring nurses to move beyond basic competence through continuous self-reflection and learning about varied cultural perspectives. This approach is fundamental for building trust, reducing the risk of re-traumatization, and ultimately elevating the quality of care provided to survivors of violence. Systematic educational interventions, which include diverse case studies and experiential learning, are shown to significantly enhance cultural competence among nursing students, underscoring the importance of early integration into curricula. An intersectionality framework further advocates for understanding how various social identities intersect to shape trauma experiences and interactions with the justice system. Specific challenges arise for vulnerable groups like refugee and immigrant victims, who contend with language barriers and mistrust, necessitating culturally adapted interventions and community partnerships. Similarly, survivors of sexual assault from minority groups report disparities in service access and satisfaction, demanding culturally tailored and equitable care. Cultural beliefs and gender roles also critically influence engagement during forensic medical examinations. Addressing these multifaceted issues requires comprehensive training programs, policy reforms, and a steadfast commitment to ensuring equitable, patient-centered care for all individuals within the justice system.

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