Islam 101:
“How to take care of the Muslim patients’ needs.”

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Objectives

- Basics of Islam
- 5 things to remember when dealing with a Muslim patient.
- Some pitfalls to avoid (faux pas)
Some definitions

- **Islam**
  - The word "Islam" means **peace** and **submission**. Peace means to be at peace with yourself and your surroundings and submission means submission to the will of God. A broader meaning of the word "Islam" is to achieve peace by submitting to the will of God.

- **Muslim**
  - The word "Muslim" means one who submits to the will of God. This is done by declaring that "there is no god except one God and Muhammad is the messenger of God." In a broader sense, anyone who willingly submits to the will of God is a Muslim.
Demographics

- Over 1.2 billion people from a vast range of races, nationalities and cultures across the globe
- Southern Philippines to Nigeria
- Only about 18% live in the Arab world
- The world's largest Muslim community is in Indonesia;
- Substantial parts of Asia and most of Africa are Muslim, while significant minorities are to be found in Russia, China, North and South America, and Europe.
Belief System

- 5 Pillars of Islam
- 7 Articles of Faith
5 Pillars of Islam

- Faith or belief in the Oneness of God (Allah) and the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh);
- Establishment of the daily prayers;
- Concern for and almsgiving to the needy;
- Self-purification through fasting; and
- The pilgrimage to Makkah for those who are able.
7 Articles of Faith

1. The Belief in Allah
2. The Belief in the Angels
3. The Belief in the Divine Scriptures
4. The Belief in the Messengers
5. The belief in the Final day
6. The belief in fate
7. The Belief in life after death
Holy Book - Quran

- At the age of 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, Muhammad, peace be upon him, received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. This revelation, which continued for 23 years, is known as the *Quran*.
- Literally, "that which is often recited"
- Divine guidance for every Muslim
- Confirms the revelations given to earlier Prophets
- Deals with all the subjects which concern human beings: wisdom, doctrine, worship, transactions, law, etc.
Some debunking of myths

- Islam was NOT spread by the sword
- Not all Muslim men have 4 wives
- Muslims are NOT anti-Jesus

"...And nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say: 'We are Christians': because among these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world. And they are not arrogant." (The Holy Quran 5:82)
Sacrifices on the Third day of Hajj in Makkah – Feast of Abraham
5 Things To Remember

1. **Food** - make **SURE** that there is no pork on their meal trays or they will not eat anything on the tray; ask the patient if they prefer all vegetarian meals.

2. Remember to knock first – especially with a female patient, knock and wait for their response as she may not be properly covered.
3. If you enter the room and the patient is praying, come back in a few minutes; do not walk in front of the patient at this time.

4. Encourage visitation by family and friends; Muslims are encouraged to visit the sick as it is a blessing for them; if patient has no dietary restrictions, encourage family to bring patient’s favorite foods.

5. Female patient’s will appreciate having only female health care providers if at all possible; male’s will prefer male.
Beliefs Related to Health Care

- Muslim patients do not consider illness to be a punishment from God. They also believe that dying is a part of living and an entrance to the next life; a transformation from one life to another, a part of a journey, and a contract and part of their faith in God.

- The Qur'an says, "They (true believers) say: To God we belong and to Him is our return."
Some tit-bits ....

- The sanctity of life is an injunction.
- Abortion is not advised except to save the mother's life or in very limited circumstances in early pregnancy due to medical or fetal indications. Individual decisions may vary.
- It is a religious custom that an elder says the Islamic prayer call in an infant's right ear shortly after birth.
- Circumcision of male infants is recommended and is universally practiced.
- Blood transfusions are allowed.
More trivia …..

- Artificial reproductive technology is permitted only during the span of intact marriage between husband and wife.
- Organ transplantation, both donating and receiving, is allowed with some restrictions (donor material of porcine origin).
- Genetic engineering to cure a disease is acceptable. To date, Muslim jurists have called for a ban on human cloning.
Keep this in mind ....

- Islam does not prohibit Muslim physicians from caring for AIDS patients or those with other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Assisted suicide and euthanasia are not permitted.
- Maintaining a terminal patient on artificial life support for a prolonged period in a vegetative state is not encouraged.
- Autopsy is not encouraged. However, it is permitted if required by law.
Medical & Nursing Care

- Respect modesty and privacy (knock on the door, announce your arrival, etc.).
- Limit eye contact.
- Do not touch while talking.
- Some Muslim women will insist on covering their whole bodies except for the face, hands and feet at all times. Some examinations may be done while a patient wears a gown. Hospital gowns should be long, with long sleeves. If such clothing is unavailable, Muslim women should be allowed to use their own gowns.
Although Islam does not ban treatment by the opposite sex, providing the patient with a nurse and/or physician of the same sex when possible is recommended, especially if the patient feels strongly about it. Alternately, a male physician should examine a female patient in the presence of her husband or another female if the patient desires, when possible.

Many Muslims are new immigrants from a wide variety of countries and may have language comprehension problems. Therefore, take time to explain tests, procedures and treatments to the patient and appropriate family members. It may be necessary to arrange for an interpreter.
In matters of terminal care, the attending physician should consult the patient, the family, the ethicist, and preferably, an Islamic scholar before making a final decision.

Health care providers (including nurses, physicians and chaplains) should comfort the terminally ill patient, making sure he/she is pain-free, have his/her relatives and friends nearby, and have access to a Muslim Imam who can read the Qur'an and make special prayers.

It is important that funeral and burial arrangements be made in advance in consultation with the family and according to the wishes of the dying or deceased patient if possible.
With minimum delay, the body is to be removed
to the funeral home because Muslims prefer an
expeditious burial. Provide routine post-mortem
care; the body should be gowned and shrouded.

Allow the family and Imam to follow Islamic
guidelines for preparing the dead body for an
Islamic funeral. The dead body should be given
the same respect and privacy as during life.

For hospice care, the family may prepare for
washing and shrouding of the body immediately
after death, prior to removal.
Summary

- 5 things to keep in mind
- Let us be open, accommodative
- Muslims are actually scared thru’ these times
- Yes, We are UNITED NATIONS
- A bouquet of Flowers
Thank you ..... 

- For your patient listening.
- For inviting me
- Please feel free to e-mail with any questions or clarifications.
- If I don’t know the answer, I shall find out for you!
- Mayub@swmail.sw.org