Caring for Elderly Immigrants: Is it Possible to have Equal Opportunities?

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Introduction

Immigration has exposed people to difficulties in accessing proper health care. Frequently enough institutions are not suited to fully accommodate patient’s beliefs, cultural necessities, presenting different communication barriers, especially with older patients [1,2].

This situation could increase the vulnerability of those patients, in particular those who require specific treatment or have special needs. According to the Health World Organization, in order to try to minimize social’s differences, it is urgent that Nations around the world direct their public policies to include those specific needs, taking into account the most vulnerable groups [3-5]. Therefore, as a main concern, the elderly immigrants should be taken into special consideration. One of the causes that explain their precarious situation is the lack of health professionals trained in cultural sensibility, the absence of their family, as well as social, financial and institutional support to find qualified professionals [5,6].

Considering this, Nurses and other health care professionals should be especially sensitive to this particular problematic by improving their different skills in order to be more efficient while caring for unprivileged patients, such as the elderly. This could be achieved by training the professionals in understanding the socio-cultural differences with their patients, which could lead to better results. [7].

These multicultural aspects that could affect the relationship with the patient, have been exposed by Nurses, who said that cultural diversity was challenging and frustrating, and that the most important difficulties were language, lack of training, cultural differences and little organizational support [8].

For health care professionals would be important to examine their personal and professional knowledge before approaching a patient and their families, different from their own culture, which would improve the attention’s quality, especially in elderly patients. This would prevent some problems, such as cultural imposition and to help prevent the patient’s lack of integrity [9].

Finally, it has to be said that the organization’s involvement is crucial in order to train and help health care professionals to provide a more sensitive cultural treatment to elderly and international patients.

References