

Poster Session III

Poster # 4

Career Advancement and Culturally-Specific Gender-Norm Conflicts in Female Mexican Nurses

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Purpose: This presentation discusses gender issues as described by female Mexican nurses of different socio-economic statuses in the context of work, familial and societal gender norm expectations.

Background: Societal gender-norm expectations for some Hispanic female nurses are at times in conflict with career advancement and trajectory. This conflict is caused by the attempt to balance gender-norm expectations and the demands required for advancement within the US nursing workforce. Little attention has been paid to this conflict in nurses who are women of color, particularly, Hispanic nurses. This conflict may impede the professional growth of these nurses whose percentages of the American nursing workforce continue to increase. Identifying the unique circumstances within this community will be important for recruiting Hispanic nurses into the profession.

Methods: With 40 female Mexican nurses serving as the case example, this study was a secondary analysis of interview data initially analyzed in a qualitative study examining the professionalization of Mexican nurses. With gender and career advancement as the primary focus on the study, the secondary content analysis consisted of a three-phase axial coding process that sought to: (1) confirm previously identified themes; (2) identification of new culturally-related themes; and (3) determine relationships among newly identified themes.

Results: Findings include the identification of conflict between achieving career goals and meeting gender-norm expectations. Several gender-norm and career goal conflicts include: (1) parenting issues; (2) absent spouse; and (3) empowered societal status. Regardless of workforce responsibility level, these groups described the conflict regarding gender-norms and parenting duties, presence in a dwelling, and financial/intellectual superiority that the nursing discipline provides inside a segment of self-identified Mexican culture subscribing nurses. Differences exist regarding this conflict and socio-economic status.

Conclusion and Implications: The study found some common challenges women face in balancing career and family demands. The unique findings of this analysis highlighted the culturally specific dynamics experienced by the female Mexican nurse. To meet the demand for culturally competent care by increasing the number of Hispanic nurses in the US, health care organizations may succeed in retaining nurses by understanding probable career advancement barriers.