

# Cultural Considerations and Child Maltreatment In Search of Universal Principles



Gauri Kolhatkar, MD, MPH<sup>a,\*</sup>, Carol Berkowitz, MD<sup>b</sup>

## KEYWORDS

- Culture • Cultural competence • Child maltreatment • Corporal punishment
- Physical discipline • Child abuse and neglect • Universal child rights

## KEY POINTS

- Culturally competent services, sensitive to diverse health beliefs and practices and to cultural and linguistic needs, are essential in achieving parity in care and facilitating positive health outcomes for children and families across all cultures.
- Cultural competence requires individuals and organizations to (1) appreciate diversity, (2) assess their own cultural perspectives and biases, (3) bridge cross-cultural differences, (4) acquire and disseminate knowledge regarding culture, and (5) continually address the changing needs of the culturally diverse population they serve.
- Owing to worldwide variability in resources and cultural/social norms, policies of child protection and definitions of child maltreatment vary.
- The use of culturally respectful models in the determination of child maltreatment does not mandate universal tolerance of all cultural practices.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) establishes universal principles for approaching child maltreatment and child protection.
- The application of the UN CRC requires an understanding of what is happening locally, including how a cultural group is situated within its social and political milieu, in addition to relevant laws and policies.

*[T]he action most worth watching is not at the center of things but where the edges meet....shorelines, weather fronts, international borders. There are interesting frictions and incongruities in these places, and often, if you stand at the point of tangency, you can see both sides better than if you were in the middle of either one. This is especially true...when the opposition is cultural.*

—Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*<sup>1</sup>

---

Disclosure of Relationships: The authors have no relationships to disclose.

<sup>a</sup> Child Abuse Pediatrics, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, 1000 West Carson Street, Box 437, Torrance, CA 90509, USA; <sup>b</sup> Department of Pediatrics, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, 1000 West Carson Street, Box 437, Torrance, CA 90509, USA

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [gkolhatkar@labiomed.org](mailto:gkolhatkar@labiomed.org)

Pediatr Clin N Am 61 (2014) 1007–1022  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2014.06.005>

[pediatric.theclinics.com](http://pediatric.theclinics.com)

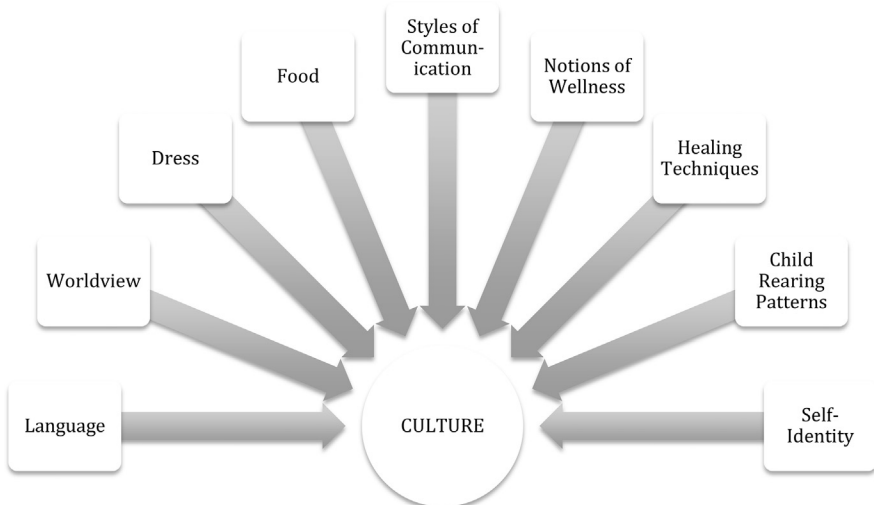
0031-3955/14/\$ – see front matter © 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Globalization, technology, media, and human migration patterns have all contributed to creating a landscape of cultural diversity that is being increasingly recognized within health care delivery models.<sup>2</sup> Groups have belief-systems that shape how they perceive health and illness, and whether and where they choose to seek out health care. Anne Fadiman's pivotal documentation of the 1980s clash between a Hmong refugee family and their daughter's health care providers in a Northern California community hospital highlighted what is now a well-recognized theme within the health care system. Importantly with regard to maltreated children, culture can affect their perception and disclosure of trauma, expression of symptoms, treatment-seeking behaviors, and attitudes toward treatment and recovery.<sup>3,4</sup> Especially challenging is the question of how health professionals resolve the tension between respecting cultural norms or child-rearing practices and the importance of determining what constitutes harm and child maltreatment.<sup>4</sup> Addressing this complex question necessitates an understanding of the culture of the child and the family, and also of the health care provider. In addition, consideration must be given to the social and cultural norms and policies of the society within which the circumstances are being evaluated. Moreover, there exists a universal standard of child rights that must be upheld to protect children of all cultures from harm and maltreatment.

## BACKGROUND: CULTURE AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY

### *Defining Culture*

Culture is a set of "beliefs, attitudes, values and standards of behavior" that are passed down generationally, and are so entrenched within a cultural group that they are obvious and need not be overtly stated or challenged and defended.<sup>3</sup> Key elements of culture are depicted in [Fig. 1](#).<sup>3</sup> Culture is "not monolithic and static but variable and dynamic," and is modified by time and continual interactions within its larger environment.<sup>5</sup> Some of these dynamic processes are listed in [Table 1](#).<sup>6</sup>



**Fig. 1.** Components of culture. (Adapted from Abney VD. Cultural competency in the field of child maltreatment. In: Myers JE, Berliner L, Briere J, et al, editors. The APSAC handbook on child maltreatment. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; 2002.)

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4173796>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4173796>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)