

Case Study: Mr. Chin, a hard-working migrant farmer, has come to your office complaining of worsening back pain. Mr. Chin has a history of chronic back pain, however, now states there is numbness and tingling down his left leg. Mr. Chin does not have insurance, however, has paid his clinic bills on time when he has come in for an acute problem. After your exam, you suspect he has a herniated disc and needs a CT scan or MRI to confirm. You discuss this with Mr. Chin, who may be willing to get the scan, but refuses surgery and instead states he will just see his chiropractor for adjustments and acupuncturist for treatment.

1. Briefly discuss your decision in choosing this case study.

This case study caught my attention because my dad suffers from back pain. He has undergone multiple back surgeries; however, his surgeon disagrees with him receiving alternate therapies such as chiropractic care. Unfortunately, bias exists concerning alternative therapies, and I am interested in exploring ways to approach this situation as a culturally competent nurse practitioner (NP). According to Cole and Gunther (2023), care should be based on what is best for that specific patient, not what the NP “thinks is best.”

2. As a nurse practitioner, how would you handle this patient scenario? (Culture sensitivity, culture awareness, cultural humility, communication, treatment plan, etc.)

As the NP handling this patient’s worsening back pain, I would first establish cultural sensitivity and awareness by approaching the situation from Mr. Chin's perspective (Cole & Gunther, 2023). I would openly listen to the patient while addressing language barriers or cultural preferences. I would discover what the patient has done in the past to treat the pain, any cultural beliefs regarding pain, and why he prefers

alternative treatment over surgical treatment. I will openly discuss with Mr. Chin if his desire for acupuncture and chiropractor care is due to his cultural preferences or regarding lack of insurance. According to Tsui-Ting et al. (2022), performing a cultural assessment is essential in gathering information about the patient's background while openly communicating cultural values. Therefore, cultural awareness is obtained by the NP when the values and beliefs of the patient remains the top priority.

Demonstrating cultural humility, the NP will enter the relationship with Mr. Chin to honor his beliefs, customs, and values (Stubbe, 2020). Therefore, the NP approaches the treatment plan in a sensitive approach, avoiding personal bias. I would ensure the patient feels open to discussing the best treatment plan. According to Stubbe (2020), the NP should ask the patient what they think will be helpful. I would ask Mr. Chin if he would desire any medications to alleviate the back pain, ensuring to check with local pharmacies concerning costs. I could also collaborate with other members of my healthcare clinic to see if physical therapy or pain management could be an option for this patient. I could discuss and show the patient how to perform exercises at home to help with herniated discs. I would also ask if the patient has received acupuncture or chiropractor care in the past and if it was helpful. I could also call the alternate medicine clinic and offer any information to the clinic if the patient has any communication barriers. After coming up with a mutually agreed treatment plan, I would ask if the patient had any further questions regarding the plan and instruct the patient to follow-up if the condition worsens.

3. Discuss how culture competency and professional ethics play a role in your treatment of this patient and in your future role as a nurse practitioner.

Cultural competency and professional ethics are vital in Mr. Chin's treatment plan and my future role as a practicing NP. Rather than strictly focusing on the patient's illness, I can provide holistic care by considering social, spiritual, lifestyle, societal, and familiar aspects (Cole & Gunther, 2023). As a future NP, I will constantly work towards cultural competence and professional ethics, structuring each patient encounter to build mutual respect and trust.

References

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