

Role of Socio-cultural Determinants on Self Care

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Self care has long been occurring before the era of germ theory and still prevailing in all communities. Based on the demand side of health care system, self care refers to any activities undertaken deliberately by a person with the purpose of maintaining one's own health status, preventing oneself from illness, discovering suitable remedies when one feels ill with the purpose of getting well. Self care practices are classified as beneficial, harmless, uncertain and harmful practices. Several socio-cultural determinants of self care including health value, health literacy, cultural and religious beliefs, behavioral capacity, role of family, community and social network, socio-economic status, migration and urbanization, etc. Strategies to promote effective self care should target at individual, family, and community levels. Holistic approach, multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches, health education/communication and empowerment for behavioral change, role of community-based health workers as self care development facilitators are necessary. Key challenges for self care interventions include recognition of self care concept among health professionals, over-advertisement by private medical and health business, modification of harmful self care practices, and how to change the role of health care providers to self care development facilitators. Social behavioral research to promote self care should focus on social determinants of self care, perceived need, attitudes, and self care practices, especially on self medication and treatments, use of drug over the counter, as well as community-based effective self care intervention studies.