

## A Position Statement on Cultural Diversity and Sensitivity in Perianesthesia Nursing Practice



The American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (ASPAN) has the responsibility to advance cultural sensitivity within the specialty through nursing practice, education, research, and leadership. ASPAN promotes a safe environment in which the professional perianesthesia nurse delivers quality care among diverse populations, encompassing the culture of the patient, the nurse and the community/setting.

### **Background**

Ethnocentrism is a phenomenon which refers to the way the lifestyles, experiences, values and norms of one group in a society are believed to be 'right' and assumed to be common to everyone in society. Cultural bias refers to a firm position or stance that one's own values and beliefs must govern the situation or decisions.<sup>1</sup> This belief is common to all cultural groups<sup>2,3,4,5</sup> and can be conscious or unconscious affecting the everyday interaction of a nurse with their patients, family members and healthcare team members.

Knowledge and skills related to cultural diversity and sensitivity are vital components in perianesthesia nursing. A 1990 census predicted that the changing cultural demographics of the nation would increase the overall cultural diversity of the population.<sup>6</sup> Current practice reflects these changes within the patient, healthcare provider and workplace environment.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) recognizes that the impact of culture as a causative influence on the perceptions, interpretations and behaviors of persons in specific cultural groups is important.<sup>7</sup> Knowledge and skills related to cultural sensitivity are vital components in perianesthesia nursing.

### **Position**

It is the position of ASPAN that perianesthesia nurses seek knowledge of and develop skills in cultural diversity and sensitivity to promote positive outcomes in perianesthesia settings.

To promote cultural diversity and sensitivity:

- Integrate issues related to cultural diversity and sensitivity into perianesthesia education, research and clinical practice;
- Encourage research activities related to cultural diversity;
- Develop guidelines to support and enhance knowledge and skills in cultural diversity;
- Promote and expand collegial partnerships with other organizations.

### **Expected Outcomes**

Perianesthesia nurses will be respectful, knowledgeable, and culturally sensitive when caring for patients and interacting with others of diverse backgrounds, lifestyles, values, beliefs, and practices.

All perianesthesia nurses will familiarize themselves with and inform other members of the healthcare team of this position statement.

ASPAN, as the voice of perianesthesia nursing, must externalize this information by sharing this position with regulatory agencies and professional organizations that interface with the perianesthesia nursing specialty.



## Approval of Statement

This statement was recommended by a vote of the ASPAN Board of Directors on November 5, 2005 and approved by a vote of the ASPAN Representative Assembly on April 30, 2006 in Orlando, Florida.

This position was reviewed at the October 2007 Standards and Guidelines committee meeting in Batesville, Indiana.

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