

# The Muslim Patient

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# The Muslim Patient

## Objectives:

- Review Basics of Islam (which will guide your care) and give us a better understanding
- Things to remember when taking care of a Muslim patient, especially females
- Pitfalls to avoid

# The Muslim Patient

- Disclosure-
- I am a Muslim, other than that we are good!

# The Muslim Patient

- Third largest Faith/Religion in the US.
- 3.4 million , expected to double by 2050
- Fastest growing religion in the world
- Islam – simplest definition is Peace and Submission to God
- Muslim – “Believer” or someone who attains peace through submission to God

**Although small, American Muslim population projected to grow**



Note: Projections include both adults and children.

Source: The Future of World Religions:  
Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

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# The Muslim Patient

## *Islamic Tenets of Faith:*

1. Belief in One God (Allah)
2. Belief in Angels of God
3. Belief in Prophets/Messengers of God
4. Belief in the scriptures revealed by God
5. Belief in the Day of Accountability
6. Belief in a Life after Death (Heaven and Hell)

## *Five Pillars of Islam:*

1. Declaration of faith
2. Obligatory 5 Daily Prayers
3. Giving to charity/poor
4. Fasting in the month of Ramadan (sunset to sunrise)
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (health and wealth)

# The Muslim Patient

## *Medical Care and Exam*

- Modesty and respect towards opposite gender
- Same sex provider is always optimal
- Wearing a headscarf / “hijab” (women with women do not have to cover up, easier to examine)
- Avoid touching without asking – including stethoscope
- Keep interaction comfortable
- Remember to knock – and wait – may be undressing

# The Muslim Patient

## *Medical Care and Exam*

They may want to keep their traditional long gown (“abaya”) on as most hospital gowns do not cover entire body – the body is considered sacred and private - please respect



# The Muslim Patient

## Ramadaan

- A holy month of fasting
- 9<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar lasting 29-30 days
- 2018- May 15-June 14<sup>th</sup> ( -10 days earlier)
- One of the 5 pillars of Islam and a **religious obligation** on all healthy adult Muslims
- Muslims fast refrain from eating, drinking, sexual relations, smoking, lying, backbiting and all vices from dawn until sunset. (includes no water or gum)



# The Muslim Patient

## Ramadaan

- The purpose of Ramadaan is to build God-consciousness by temporarily refraining from fulfilling basic needs and desires, while focusing on spiritual, emotional and physical well-being through discipline, prayer and fasting.
- Another purpose is to build empathy, sympathy and compassion for those less fortunate and appreciate ones blessings
- Aim at developing closeness and gratefulness towards God
- *“Ramadan Kareem!” – means Happy Ramadaan*
- Followed by a celebration called “Eid”



# The Muslim Patient

## Ramadaan

As Physicians, we must promote:

○ Eating a well-balanced pre-dawn and evening meal during each day of the Ramadaan fast.

- Pre-dawn meal is called *suhoor*.
- Evening meal is called *iftaar*.



○ Emphasize **complex carbohydrates** that release energy more slowly while fasting (e.g. wheat, oats, beans, lentils, dates, etc.)

○ Increase **fiber-rich foods** that digest slowly (e.g. bran, whole-grain cereals, whole-grain bread, fruits, etc.)

○ Avoid heavily processed fats, foods and high-glycemic carbs (such as refined flour or sugar, white bread, or white rice, etc.)

# The Muslim Patient Ramadaan

What about the fasting Muslim patient and medications?

- If medications are withheld (HTN? DM? Seizures?):
  - Hyperglycemia
  - Diabetic ketoacidosis
  - Hyperosmolar hyperglycemic state
  - Dehydration
  - Blood pressure issues
- If medications are taken without dose adjustment:
  - Hypoglycemia
- Warning signs for these conditions should be given along with instructions to break the fast and seek medical attention if symptoms occur



# The Muslim Patient

## Ramadaan

Who is exempt from fasting?

- Physically sick, medically incapable, terminally ill, etc (Qur'an 2:184-185)
- Traveler on a journey
- Women during menstruation
- Pregnant and Lactating women
- Pre-pubertal children



# The Muslim Patient

## Ramadaan

- Many Muslim patients choose to fast during Ramadaan, especially women
- Give warning signs that warrant breaking the fast:
  - Decreased fetal movement
  - Extreme fatigue or dizziness
  - Nausea with vomiting
- Advise them to hydrate during non-fasting hours
- Eat a well balanced pre-dawn and evening meal (do not skip the pre-dawn meal!)
- Recommend alternating days
- Give precautions against excessive daytime activity



# The Muslim Patient

## Ramadaan

### Medical Can and Cannot of Ramadaan:

- Eye drops, ear drops, brushing teeth - **YES**
- Inhalers and nebulizer treatments, nasal sprays - **YES**
- Necessary injections such as immunizations, insulin, and other intramuscular or subcutaneous injections - **YES**
- IV fluids - **NO** (dehydration warrants breaking the fast)
- Donating blood - **NO**
- Oral meds. during the fasting hours - **NO** (invalidates the fast)
- *When in doubt about these or other issues, if sick, patient has an excuse, otherwise can be advised to consult their local religious leader*

# The Muslim Patient

## Tidbits

- Muslims pray 5 times a day (towards direction of Makkah)
- Give them time to pray (if in pain can give chair and pray)
- Give them privacy during this time
- Do not stand in front them when they are praying
- Avoid excessive noise



# The Muslim Patient

## Tidbits

- Believe in life after death
- Quran encourages a healthy living and seek medical attention





# The Muslim Patient

## Tidbits

- Blood donations/transfusions are acceptable
- Abortion, not allowed unless it saves the life of mother, rape or due to inevitable fetal demise
- Barrier methods are preferred contraception methods – “Coitus Interruptis” ( i.e. condoms, etc.)
- Islamic custom for Islamic prayer to be called in newborns ear when first born
- Circumcision of males is mandatory
- Reporting STDs and medical records vs. culture

# The Muslim Patient

## Tidbits



- Organ transplantation and donation is allowed with certain conditions (do no harm)
  - According to the Qur'an, saving a life is as if one has saved all of mankind.
  - If the organ will save a life and not jeopardize the life of the donor then permissible
  - If patient is dead, and organs can save a life immediately, then permissible
- Assisted suicide is not allowed
- Islam does not prohibit Muslim physicians from caring for AIDS patients or those with other sexually transmitted diseases.

# The Muslim Patient

## Tidbits

- Food in Islam must be Halal (permissible, slaughtered at the neck with the name of God, blood drained)
- All meat, except pork is allowed as long as it is Halal
  - All Seafood is allowed
  - All Vegetarian options are allowed
  - Kosher is allowed
  - No alcohol preparation
  - No porcine products



# The Muslim Patient

## Tidbits

- Lots of visitors during illness and death because visiting the sick is a blessing and encouraged (call for an Imam or Muslim Chaplain)
- May see the Qur'an being read or listened to during illness (considered as a type of healing)
- Maintaining a terminal patient on artificial life is discouraged
- Autopsy is discouraged unless required by law
- Cremation is forbidden
- Burial must take place as soon as possible within 24-72 hours after death (sooner the better)

# Summary

- Respect - take your time
- Ask if you don't know
- Advise the fasting patient
- Understanding basic principles will help
- Use Interpreter when needed
- Ask fellow Muslim Colleagues

Any Questions?