"The changing demographics and economics of our growing multicultural world, and the long standing disparities in the health status of people from culturally diverse backgrounds has challenged health care providers and organizations to consider cultural diversity as a priority" (Campinha-Bacote, 2003, para. 1). When dealing with patients from different cultures, there are many factors to consider. How patients define health and illness, practices to maintain a state of well being, what they believe the cause of illness is, how illness is cured in their culture, and the difference in the providers culture influences the patients health ("nursingworld.org, 1991").

In order to care for patients from different cultures it is important for healthcare professionals to become culturally competent (Campinha-Bacote, 2003). Cultural competence is defined as; "understanding the importance of social and cultural influences on patients health beliefs and behaviors; considering how these factors interact at multiple levels of the health care delivery system and devising interventions that take these issues into account to assure quality health care delivery to diverse patient populations" (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Firempong, 2005, p. 297). Cultural competence is critical in caring for patients in the health care setting. According to Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, and Park, cultural competence is a "potential strategy used to improve quality and eliminate racial/ethical disparities in healthcare" (2005, p. 499). In order to be culturally competent, healthcare providers need to consider the desires of the patient, have awareness of the culture they are caring for, and be skillful when caring for patients from that culture, such as, culturally sensitive assessment skills (Campinha-Bacote, 2003).

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