

Cultural definitions of anatomy and physiology

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Objectives

- After completion of this lecture the students should be able to:
 - 1-Differentiate between main Concepts of body image
 - 2-Discuss different attitudes regarding ,body image ;type of clothes 'inner structure of the body

Out lines

1-Introduction

2-Concepts of body image can be divided into

3-Shape, size, clothing and the surface of the body

4- inner structure of the body

5-The functioning of the body

introduction

- The culture of the group in which we grow up teaches us how to perceive and interpret the many changes that can occur over time in our own bodies — and in the bodies of other people.
- We learn how to differentiate a ‘young’ body from an ‘aged’, one,
- a ‘sick’ body from a ‘healthy’ one; how to define ‘a fever’ or ‘a pain’, a feeling of clumsiness’ or of ‘anxiety’; how to perceive some parts of the body as ‘public’ and others as ‘private’; and how to view some bodily functions as socially acceptable and others as morally unclean

Concepts of body image can be divided into three main groups

- 1-Beliefs about the optimal shape and size of the body, including the clothing and decoration of its surface
 - Beliefs about the body's inner structure
- 3-Beliefs about how it functions
- All three are influenced by social and cultural background and can have important effects on the health of the individual

Shape, size, clothing and the surface of the body

This includes information about

1- gender

2- social status,

3-occupation and membership of certain groups both religious and secular.

4-bodily gestures and postures,

5- The body languages of, for example, doctors, priests, policemen and salespeople are very different from each other, and convey different types of messages to other people.

Clothing

- is also of particular importance in
- 1- signaling social rank and occupation in the Western world mink coats and jewels are worn as displays of wealth, in contrast to the ill-fitting clothes of the poor. Similarly, the white coat of the Western doctor or the starched cap of the nurse have not only a practical aspect cleanliness and the prevention of infection but also a social function, indicating their membership of a prestigious and powerful, occupational group, with its own specific rights

beliefs about how the body is constructed are based on

- 1-Inherited folklore, zdcvgh
- 2-Books and magazines,
- 3- Personal experience and
- 4-Theorizing.

The importance of this 'inside-the-body' image is that it influences people's perception and presentation of bodily complaints. It also influences their responses to medical treatment.

Conceptions of what lies inside the body are not static, however. They can vary with certain physical and psychological states, and seem to vary with age.

The functioning of the body

Although beliefs about the body's structure can have clinical importance, those about how it functions are probably more significant in their effect on people's behaviour. Beliefs about function usually deal with one or more interrelated aspects of the body

I. Its inner working

The effect on these of outside influence such as diet and
2
environment

3-The nature (and disposal) of the by-products of the bodies :

functioning, such as faeces, urine and menstrual blood

In the ancient Indian system, there are similar highly complex concepts of the physiology of the body that equate health with balance

The 'plumbing' model of the body

- Termed the 'plumbing' model. The body is conceived of as
- series of hollow cavities or chambers, connected with
- another, and with the body's orifices, by a series of pipes
- tubes. The major cavities are usually 'the chest' and
- stomach', which almost completely fill the thoracic
- abdominal spaces respectively
- The plumbing model does not necessarily cover all aspects of the body's physiology and anatomy, but mostly deals with the respiratory, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, and genitourinary functions of the body. It is not a coherent or internally consistent system, but rather a series of metaphors used to explain the body's functioning. Often different physiological systems are lumped together if they occur in the same area

The body as machine

- The machine model includes the idea that the individual parts of the body, like the parts of a motor car, may fail or stop working, and may sometimes need to be replaced.
- Modern 'spare part surgery', with its widespread usage of organ transplants (heart, lungs, liver, kidney, nerves, skin, bone, larynx and cornea) and various prostheses (artificial joints, bones, arteries, heart valves and teeth monitors in obstetrics

The body during pregnancy

- *The rituals and taboos surrounding pregnancy therefore serve both to mark this transition and to protect mother and fetus during this dangerous period*
- 1- If the pregnant woman saw something that frightened her — like a cat, or a fish — the child might be born resembling that object; one woman who had been frightened by a fish during pregnancy gave birth to a child that ‘has two holes in the roof of her mouth and can swim like a fish’.
- 2- One woman thought that if a pregnant woman craved chicken, but did not get it, the baby could be born ‘looking like a chicken’.
- 3- Other beliefs related to the effect of particular types of food on the fetus: for example, a baby might be born with ‘red spots if the mother ate too many cherries or strawberries during pregnancy, or have a ‘chocolate mark’ if she ate (or even sat upon) any chocolate. Snow points out that some of these dietary
- beliefs may be dangerous in pregnancy

- 4-Beliefs about the state of the uterus during pregnancy can also affect a pregnant woman's health. belief was that the uterus was a hollow organ that was 'tightly closed' during pregnancy to prevent the loss of the
- fetus.
- 5-One woman believed that pregnant women could not
- contract venereal disease (and therefore did not need to take
- precautions against it), as during pregnancy 'the uterus is closed
- and germs cannot enter

Beliefs about blood

- Experience of blood — as a vital liquid circulating within the
- body, and which appears at the surface at times of injury, illness, menstruation or childbirth — provides the basis for lay theories about a variety of illnesses.
- In general, these illnesses are ascribed to changes in
- 1- Volume ('high blood', due to too much blood),
- 2-Consistency ('thin blood', causing anaemia),
- 3-Temperature ('hot illnesses' caused by 'heat in the blood' in Morocco), qualih,' ('impurities' in the blood, from constipation), or
- 4-Polluting power (menstrual blood causing 'weakness' in men).

Thank You

