

Working with Muslim Patients in Psychiatric Settings Discussion Summary

In December 2024, our Ethics for Lunch series explored the complexities of providing psychiatric care to Muslim patients, focusing on a case of a young Middle Eastern graduate student presenting with acute psychosis. The discussion highlighted the interplay of cultural, religious, and family dynamics in navigating mental health treatment and decision-making.

Key themes included the stigma surrounding psychiatric diagnoses within Muslim communities, the influence of spiritual beliefs on treatment adherence, and the critical role of family in medical decision-making. Presenters underscored the importance of understanding the diversity within the Muslim population, distinguishing between cultural and religious factors, and integrating spirituality into care. Strategies for balancing respect for spiritual beliefs with evidence-based treatments were explored, emphasizing cultural humility, shared decision-making, and the potential for collaboration with imams or spiritual leaders. The role of chaplains in caring for Muslim patients was discussed.