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## JUNIORS

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Men's & Women's Alterations

# Embassy families 'psyched-down'

**United Press International**  
ST. LOUIS — Failing to understand and respect a hospital patient's culture may be just as harmful to a satisfactory recovery as failing to prescribe proper medical treatment.

That lesson is taught by Marilyn Rubin, a professor at St. Louis University, in her course on transcultural nursing.

Not every culture views illness in the same way, Rubin said in an interview, so American hospitals and nurses should be careful not to impose distinctly American values on patients from other backgrounds.

"We don't study every culture," Rubin said, "but we use a few examples to whet the students' appetites, to open their eyes to these questions."

"We want to make sure they're not denying anything to their patients just because they don't understand their needs. It works."

Lectures by representatives of black, American Indians and Chinese cultures are part of the course. Rubin recalled what a black nurse on the university's staff told the students:

"After white patients have been hospitalized for a few days, nurses probably will address them by their first name. The patients may be calling the nurses by their first name. But blacks generally don't like that."

"They want to be addressed more formally, to be called Mr. or Mrs. They haven't had a history of this respect in our culture — for a long time it was 'Hey, boy' or calling them by their first name. They want to be

addressed with respect. It affects the personalization of their care."

Rubin said care should also be taken in assigning personnel — black patients generally want white doctors and nurses to look after them.

"It may not be true that the whites give better care," she said, "but the blacks often judge the quality of their care by what the white patients get."

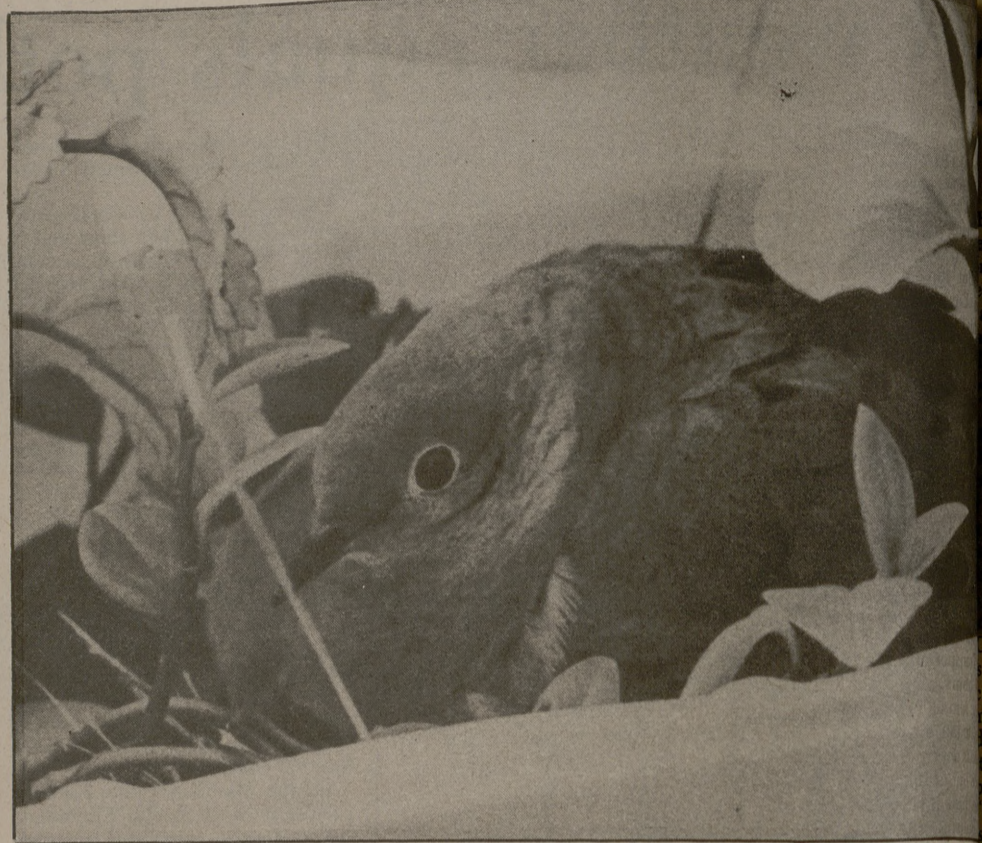
Hospital rules may seem arbitrary and impersonal to all patients, regardless of background. But to someone from another culture, Rubin said, they may seem particularly harsh and could even be harmful.

"Some patients, when they are acutely ill, may not want their spouses to be with them. American Indians want their mother's sisters, who are very important to them."

"When a Chinese father is dying, it's the oldest son who should be there. If this is denied to the son, and only the wife may go in, this could be terribly upsetting to the family. It goes against their culture, their tradition, sometimes even their religious beliefs."

Interest in transcultural nursing is new but growing, Rubin said. In a profession dedicated to helping patients be comfortable and recover as easily as possible, little things can mean a lot.

"If you've ever visited in a foreign country where they don't speak English, you know how good it is to come home and hear your mother tongue. That's how it is with these people."



Battalion photo by Gretchen

### 'Worth two in the box?'

It's hard to be the mother of two and live outside a noisy dorm room, but this bird somehow does it. She's built her nest room in Spence Hall.

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## 'Cultural care' used by nurses

**United Press International**  
MOSCOW — Why the constant reference to weather, tension and depression among U.S. diplomats and their families stationed here?

"Bitching and griping are common ways to deal with stress," said Dr. Samuel Karson, clinical psychologist under contract with the State Department's medical section.

"Chekhov had a story about a man whose friend had died. He wanted to talk but couldn't find anyone to lis-

ten. So he told his horse all about it and felt a lot better. I think you know that a good ear is a good ear."

The State Department agrees. After years of pressure from various employe organizations, the department officially added health to its list of services ten years ago.

There is a full-time psychiatrist in Kabul, Afghanistan, and a number of other embassies have visited Vienna, Jakarta, Kabul and Bangkok, where embassies also have programs.

He spent a month here at the quest of Dr. Carl Nydell, the State's medical officer, who has been against the difficulties of Moscow as he treats the community's medical ailments.

He now finds there is more to life than just their families, particularly children.

"They want more of the things they were used to stateside. More Big Macs, more sports, more activities."

"Most people take their problems with them," said Karson. "They put much less emphasis on their environment as it relates to their problems than on what is going on between a person's own ears."

"You see the same old problems here as everywhere else. Problems with anxiety and depression."

The difference, according to Karson, is that in most other countries, a person could take his problems to a mental health clinic. In Moscow, that's impossible.

"Any place where you have families, there will be mental health services," he said. "The point is not that special services exist in Moscow, but that a problem exists that is not treated."

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