Hospital Chaplaincy from a Muslim Perspective

Rehanah Sadiq Muslim Chaplain

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

What is expected of a Muslim chaplain?

How does it differ from Christian or any other sort of chaplaincy?

Perception of Illness and Death

- Muslims receive illness and death with patience and prayers
- Illness is considered a purification and may be an atonement for wrong actions
- Reward in the Hereafter
- Death is considered a journey to meet their Creator and a passage into eternal life

Religious Figures in Islam

- Religious scholar, leader, guide
- Imam, Mawlana, Molvi, Mufti, Mullah, Shaykh, 'Alim
- Hafiz (title used for one who has memorised the complete Qur'an)
- Muslim chaplain

When faced with Illness

 Serious time of deep reflection of the self and meaning of life

Qur'an, 32:9

'Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His spirit; and appointed for you hearing, and sight and hearts...'

...Fitra (innate nature)

 Connecting with the self is more important now than ever

Treatment

Refusal to take medication "It is God's will!"

Treatment is also God's will...

Hadith

"Your body has a right over you, and so seek treatment, servants of God, for every illness God created, He created a treatment for it."

Visiting patients

- Approach
- Muslim patients
- Patients of other faiths or no faith
- Referrals to other chaplains

Visitors

- A religious duty
- Visiting and assisting the indisposed is a basic form of worship to bring one closer to God
- Many visitors, other than family and friends may come to see the patient

Culture & Religious Belief

- Diversity
- Many traditions are in line with Islamic teachings and these may vary between groups of people
- Different schools of thought
- Very diverse, both in culture and in religious belief

Working with staff

- Support i.e. one-to-one, groups
- Training e.g. nurses, consultants,
 Bereavement care services
- Inter-disciplinary work

Male and female Muslim chaplains

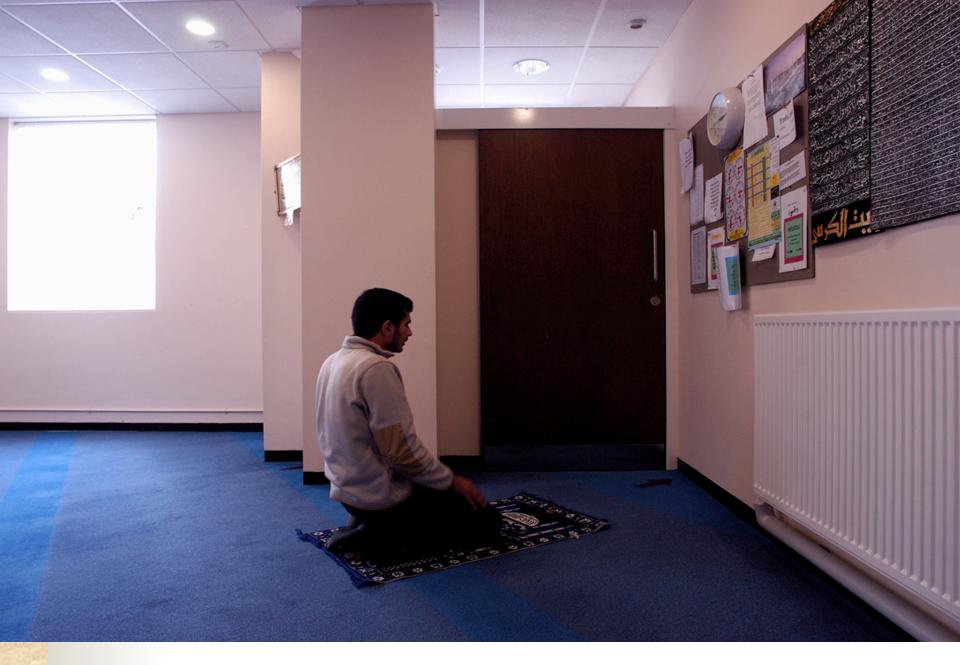
- Cultural necessity
- On-call availability a challenge
- Working part-time in many hospitals

Muslim chaplaincy resources

- Prayer space shared or separate?
- Wudu' / Ablution facilities
- Copies of Qur'an and prayer books
- Prayer mats
- Pebbles for 'dry ablution'
- Prayer timetable



Wudu ' / ablution facilities



Muslim prayer room

Diet

- halal (lawful)
- haram (unlawful)
- Not just pertaining to food

Forbidden (haram)

- Pork and pig products
- Flesh-eating animals
- Birds of prey
- Carrion
- Blood
- Alcohol and intoxicants
- Food ingredients, e.g. lard, animal fat, gelatine derived from non-halal sources

Lawful (halal)

All other food is lawful

"All things are allowed except that which is specifically forbidden."

- If in doubt Muslims would prefer to eat fish, eggs, or dairy products instead of meat
- Any products suitable for vegetarians (and not containing alcohol) will be *halal*
- Family will often bring food if there are no restrictions

Personal Hygiene

- Keeping Clean
- Cleanliness is considered half of faith!
- Body waste such as urine, stools and menses can make the Muslim body impure preventing them from practicing their religious rituals

Personal Hygiene

- The patient should not be left in clothes soiled by body waste
- Any clean clothes should conform to the code of dress especially while praying
- For patients who are incontinent pads should be provided and regularly changed especially before prayer times

Modesty & Etiquettes To allay anxiety...

- Separate ward/bay for female & male patients
- Examinations only exposing the part to be examined at any one time while keeping the rest of the patient covered
- Preferably by staff of the same sex or if not possible in the presence of a chaperone
- Avoiding affectionate physical contact with members of opposite sex!

Muslim chaplaincy volunteers

- Recruitment
- Training
- Supervision
- Retention



Chaplaincy volunteers at Eid Celebration



'Other volunteers' to eat the food!

Working together in a team

- Respecting differences
- Organising events
- Staff training
- Social events



Team away day



Prayers for peace in the world



Sharing and learning about one's own faith

Topics for discussion from different religious perspectives

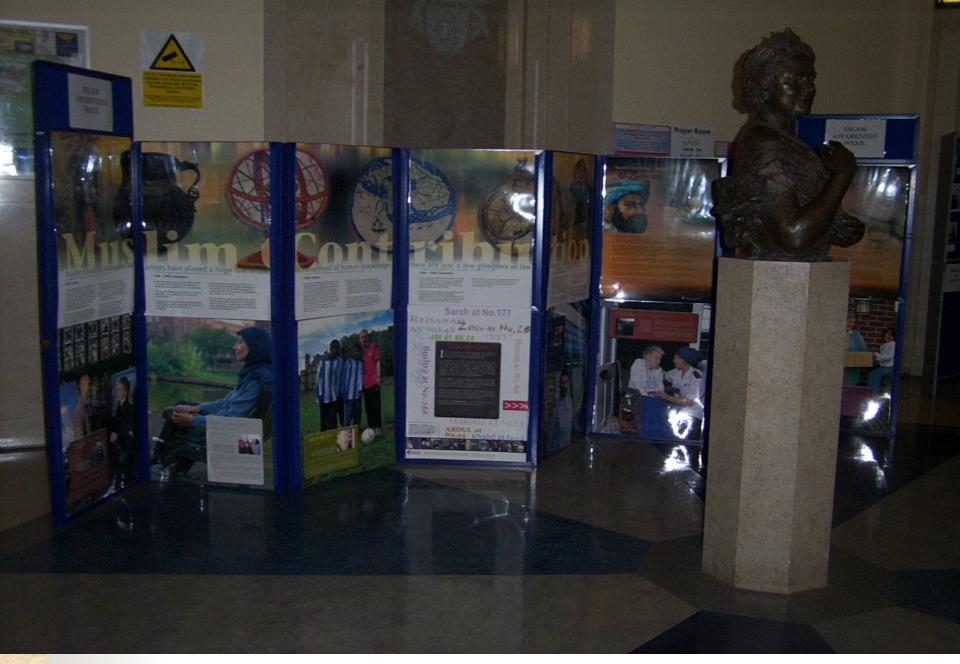
- Fasting
- Meaning of 'Church'
- Illness and suffering
- The will of God



Muslims in hospitals exhibition



Holding conferences



IAW (Islam Awareness Week) Exhibition

TITLES OF IAW PRESENTATIONS MADE IN HOSPITAL

Fasting and its implications for Muslim

patients and staff

Abdul Sitar Itrakji

Islam's contribution to medicine

The Muslim healthcare environment

Transplantation and Muslims

Cleanliness is next to Godliness

Worship provisions for the Muslim patient

Birth rites in Islam

Sohaib Mir

Faizal Khan

Majid Mukadan

Allah Ditta

Aiman Alzetani

Samia Khan



Coffee morning involving various communities

Social team events

- Religious festivals
- Annual team meal out
- Barbecues
- Garden parties
- Anniversaries



Sharing in each other's festivities!