Bosnians

Disclaimer:
While information about a specific culture can aid understanding of a patient, it is important to understand that a patient from a particular culture will not necessarily have the same beliefs or traditions associated with that culture. Each patient is unique, and there are many factors that alter a person’s cultural identity, including socioeconomic status, education, age, religion, gender, and lifestyle.

– Cultural Competency for Healthcare Providers, Champlain Valley AHEC, 2011

Country of Origin/ Migration: Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia was once a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Before the war, Bosnia’s population was approximately 44% Muslim, 31% Serbian, and 17% Croatian (Maners). The conflict began in 1991 and 1992 as Serbia embarked on "ethnic cleansing", a form of genocide aimed at eradicating non-Serbs from large sections of Bosnia (Maners). In total, over 1,700 Bosnians entered Vermont between 1993 and 2004.

Language: The language of Bosnia is Serbo-Croatian (Bosnians now refer to their language as Bosnian).

Education/Literacy: Most Bosnians are literate in their own language. In the former state system, education through the eighth grade was compulsory for both boys and girls, after which a student could opt to complete secondary and post-secondary education.

Religion: Religious affiliation falls predominantly along ethnic lines: Bosnians typically self-identify as Muslim, Serbs as Eastern Orthodox, and Croats as Catholic. Most refugees to the U.S. identify as Muslim. Islam in modern Bosnia evolved into a tolerant form with some practices diverging sharply from what is considered orthodoxy in other Islamic countries (Maners).

Medical Traditions:
Except that the health care system in Bosnia is socialized, basic health care is similar in many respects to that in the United States.

Special Considerations:
For a list of medical conditions endemic to Bosnia please see http://www.who.int/countries/bih/en/.

** The best source of information about the patient’s experiences and culture is the patient him or herself.

References:
