

American Indian & Alaskan Native Health, Creation of an Elective Course for Medical Students in the Rural Track at The University of Colorado School of Medicine

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Introduction. American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) face some of the largest health disparities in the United States. Sources of these disparities result from geographic isolation, racial microaggressions from health care providers, or mistrust and dissatisfaction with Westernized medicine. The objective of this study is to increase cultural humility and interest in indigenous health among rural track students at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Methods. A four-hour lecture series was developed and delivered to University of Colorado School of Medicine students who are members of the rural medicine track. A nine-question assessment tool was given to students before and after the course. The questionnaire included 5 Likert-style, 1 multiple choice, and 3 open response questions. Students were asked to provide a code name so that individual and group changes could be assessed. The Wilcoxon Sign Rank Test was used to assess for change between pre and post-course assessments. Keyword analysis was used to assess open response questions.

Results. Analysis of individual Likert scores showed significant changes in two of three questions designed to assess base knowledge. Although not significant on statistical testing, interest in including AI/AN content into the medical school curriculum remained high before and after the course. Keyword analysis of two free-response questions showed improvement of understanding.

Conclusion. The incorporation of American Indian and Alaskan Native Health content into the rural track curriculum at the University of Colorado School of Medicine significantly increased student knowledge about health and healthcare specific to this medically underserved population.