

A Novel Medical School Curriculum Aimed at Discussing Indigenous Health Topics

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Native American (NA) communities experience disproportionate rates of a myriad of physical and mental health conditions. A lack of culturally competent care can contribute to poor health outcomes; however, there are no published undergraduate medical education (UME) curriculum dedicated to healthcare of NA populations. The aim of this project was to develop a UME curriculum focused on the structural, historical, and cultural factors contributing to risk of and resilience against health disparities in indigenous populations. We also aimed to describe the history and structure of NA healthcare. We sought to assess preliminary feedback regarding effectiveness with a goal to improve future iterations of the curriculum. Content was created by medical school faculty, NA physicians, Indian Health Service (IHS) physicians, and NA medical students. It includes pre-course assignments, a de-identified case of familial events, and a two-hour small group (10 students) session. Facilitators attended a one-hour training and were provided a faculty guide with readings and discussion questions. Students (N=93) answered three questions regarding session effectiveness on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'extremely'. 48% of students reported the session was extremely or very effective at advancing their understanding of generational trauma. 50% of students reported the session was extremely or very effective at improving awareness of social determinants of health for NAs and expanding knowledge regarding the IHS. Qualitative feedback indicates students want a longer session, a lecture format for historical content, and a patient panel for NA community perspective. Future work will include feedback-based curriculum updates.