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Effectiveness and Methods in Which Medical Institutions Teach Cultural Diversity

The research examined Literature and Medicine Discussion groups as a method of educating medical students, physicians, and other health-care workers on issues related to cultural differences in the field of medicine encounters.

I reviewed publications and results of research studies on the effectiveness and methods used by medical institutions to teach cultural diversity. I discovered that few medical institutions use discussion groups based on literature, rather than case studies, to discuss cultural concerns in the medical field. Furthermore, some academic medical institutions may not adequately address cultural issues and their effect on patient care and the patient-physician relationship.

In addition, I found that only one anthology covered health issues in the African-American culture. Hence, no anthology is currently available that addresses multiple cultures on health-related concerns.

In order to find literature useful for discussion, I collected and evaluated essays, poetry, and other literature from various cultural backgrounds. I also assessed secondary sources (criticisms of these works). Available anthologies were critiqued for appropri-

Pieces of literature that were found to be useful were tested for effective discussion in three Literature and Medicine Discussion groups: 1) with medical students, 2) with physicians, and 3) at the national American Society of Bioethics and Humanities convention. The Literature and Medicine Discussion groups provided an atmosphere that allowed for a creative and open way to express issues of concern between culture and medicine. Such discussions demonstrated how difficult it is to find the correct balance in reconciling the patient's cultural beliefs with those in the medical world. The population is diversifying and physicians need to be informed of cultural differences in order to provide adequate health care to the community.