

Addressing the gap: didactics on health care disparities by medical students in their Internal Medicine core rotation

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The American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Foundational Core Competencies for Undergraduate Medical Students, published in 2012, emphasizes the need to identify sources of disparities in population's health and access to care as part of the Practice-Based Learning and Improvement competency.

Third-year medical school course structure does not have formal academic activities dedicated to the instruction of population health disparities. The 3rd year medical school Internal Medicine core rotation is a 4-week duration course, with multiple clinical sites located in a diverse geographic area throughout the country. Didactic meetings for all students are conducted once a week using a virtual platform. Students are required to do a brief 5-minute slide presentation on a preselected Internal Medicine topic. To provide a baseline background on population health disparities to the whole group, the topic review assignment included a search of the literature on related health care disparities and presentation of the findings to their peers.

Threading spaces to discuss population health disparities into the core clerkship rotations didactics could be a strategy to increase the much-needed awareness, contribute to the fulfillment of the AACOM competency requirements and motivate the future generations to actively engage in narrowing the gaps in health care outcomes.