Integrating Religious & Cultural Competence Education into Medical Training
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Abstract
Workshop Title: Integrating Religious & Cultural Competence Education into Medical Training
Background/purpose: Medical training increasingly recognizes that cultural competence is an important component of effective communication with patients. However, religion is an aspect of culture that still often goes unaddressed in medical education. This is a significant oversight, since Americans have a high level of religiosity which can impact the health care decisions they make: a 2010 Gallup poll found that over 90% of Americans say that they believe in God and 80% state that religion is important to their lives. This session will address the disconnect between patients' needs and current medical training by introducing strategies and techniques for teaching medical students and residents how to communicate with patients from diverse religious backgrounds on if and how their religious beliefs and practices impacts their care.

Learning Objectives:
Identify the key traits and skill sets that define a culturally competent health care provider.
Describe key concepts and strategies to train health care professionals to be religiously and culturally competent.
Apply techniques for educating medical professionals on the topic of religious and cultural competence.

Teaching Methods:
This train-the-trainer session will provide medical educators with skills for how to train medical students and residents in providing religio-culturally competent health care. This session will begin with a group discussion of what constitutes a culturally competent health care provider and our training approach, which emphasizes communicating with patients about their religious and cultural backgrounds and goals for care instead of memorizing information about various religious traditions (15 minutes). The session will then move into an activity that helps providers reflect on their own social identities, the impact that these identities have in patient care, and how to facilitate a similar exercise with medical students (15 minutes). The session will then introduce key concepts and tools used to communicate effectively with patients about their religious beliefs and practices as it relates to their care (25 minutes). The next portion of the session will give participants a chance to practice facilitation techniques. The session facilitator will present a case study with questions for small group discussion, followed by a debrief discussion with the group as a whole. The group will review the objectives of the case study discussion and then discuss the objectives they should keep in mind when creating their own case study or role play activities. The final five minutes of the presentation will be reserved for questions and a discussion of next steps.

Teaching Materials
Slides to present background information and display prompts
Handouts describing key concepts
A worksheet to help participants think through their own social identity and its impact on patients
A brief clip from a documentary film

Evaluation
After the session, participants will be given an evaluation asking them to list two concrete skills they learned that will help them teach medical students/residents on how to communicate with patients from diverse religious and culture backgrounds about their religious beliefs that emerge as an aspect of patient care.