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Promoting Cultural Humility as a Core Value into Healthcare Professional Practice: Focusing on the Journey and not the Destination

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Promoting Cultural Humility as a Core Value into Healthcare Professional Practice: Focusing on the Journey and not the Destination

Abstract
There is an increase in diversity in our nation, and as such, health care professionals need to have the tools to maximize patient outcomes, considering the breadth of these needs. It is important to improve effectiveness, as health care providers, by increasing cultural awareness and knowledge of cultural humility. The three factors that guide cultural humility include lifelong commitment to self-evaluation, fixing power imbalances, and developing partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others. These aspects may enhance future health care providers’ ability to minimize health care disparities and optimize health care for all patients. In addition, discussions related to cultural humility may contribute to a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation.

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Promoting Cultural Humility as a Core Value into Healthcare Professional Practice: Focusing on the Journey and not the Destination

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ABSTRACT
There is an increase in diversity in our nation, and as such, health care professionals need to have the tools to maximize patient outcomes, considering the breadth of these needs. It is important to improve effectiveness, as health care providers, by increasing cultural awareness and knowledge of cultural humility. The three factors that guide cultural humility include lifelong commitment to self-evaluation, fixing power imbalances, and developing partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others. These aspects may enhance future health care providers’ ability to minimize health care disparities and optimize health care for all patients. In addition, discussions related to cultural humility may contribute to a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation.

Keywords: cultural humility, healthcare education, cultural competence, self-evaluation, patient outcomes
BACKGROUND
The concept of "cultural competence" first emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, drawing inspiration from the civil rights movement in the United States. This concept suggests that it is possible to attain a fixed degree of comprehension regarding a culture, which could potentially foster stereotypes and biases. Conversely, terms like "cultural humility" and "cultural sensitivity," which surfaced in the late 1990s, emphasize a perpetual journey of self-evaluation and the recognition of personal prejudices. This viewpoint advocates for continuous learning and a willingness to comprehend others’ distinct cultural backgrounds without unique cultural experiences.  

SIGNIFICANCE
As health-care providers, it is essential to be effective in providing care to culturally diverse clients. The American Psychological Association defines cultural humility as "one construct for understanding and developing a process-oriented approach to competency." While the process of achieving cultural humility is multifaceted and complex, it does involve being open to life-long learning and self-evaluation. The process of understanding cultural humility provides the necessary tools for a healthcare provider to closely self-reflect. The process of self-reflection then allows individuals to build meaningful and trustful relationships, which are all key ingredients to providing culturally competent healthcare and decreasing health disparities.

To be effective as healthcare professionals, there is need to attain cultural knowledge and awareness and to be able to implement strategies that foster culturally competent care. The process of understanding cultural humility can promote high quality clinical care and positive organizational change that enables healthcare providers to work effectively in a diverse dynamic society. A healthcare provider is tasked with incorporating tools and strategies to enhance understanding of diversity. Furthermore, they must consistently work towards achieving cultural competence at both the personal and organizational levels. Positive outcomes come from knowledge, sharing, and commitment to benefit ourselves and clients in an ever-changing and increasingly diverse multicultural society. This process enables us to promote competent delivery of healthcare services within various healthcare delivery systems. Therefore, the practice of cultural humility can extend beyond delivering culturally competent healthcare to fostering positive societal transformation.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Numerous research studies and news articles have underscored the significant income-related and cultural disparities in health care within the United States, highlighting ongoing concerns within the national healthcare system. Health care providers are often not prepared for managing a myriad of issues, particularly when integrated with cultural differences. Engaging in cultural dialogue and evidence-based practice can enable health care providers to better meet society's needs.

Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is a theoretical perspective that views individuals as key to understanding their contexts and ensuring productivity and value. Applying this perspective to cultural humility allows a practitioner to ensure that the patient or client is primary in decision-making and in creating relevance for their own care. The patient centered approach provides a way of accepting and understanding their cultural perspectives and needs for optimal health and well-being. The practitioner as servant leader does not try to maintain control or dominance but is open to constructive feedback and viewpoints.

Researchers have found that although we live in an increasingly diverse and multicultural world, the research and practice have been "unicultural." The process of understanding and respecting individual differences in heritage is important for recognizing individual differences. There also needs to be a paradigm shift in healthcare, which is an ongoing effort of many organizations such as the Institute for Diversity in Health Management, to recognize "unique cultural and linguistic factors affecting the care of diverse patients and communities." Hence, in addition to understanding cultural humility, it is also important to encourage healthcare professionals to achieve culturally competent leaders in healthcare organizations. This information is not novel, as indicated by a survey conducted by Collins et al in a 2001 healthcare quality survey. The study disclosed that patients expressed the need for enhancements in healthcare providers' awareness and comprehension of cultural differences among their patients. In addition, there is a need to understand how these differences influence healthcare. As Nair and Adetaya state, "To serve the needs of a diverse population, it is imperative that the healthcare system take measures to improve cultural competence, as well as racial and ethnic diversity.

DISCUSSION
Cultural diversity permeates every facet of our society, molding our understanding through diverse influences. A study by Gee and Ford states that racial minorities have increased morbidity and mortality rates, and that structural racism needs to be more seriously investigated as a fundamental determinant of health disparities. This study further affirms that structural racism has evolved to affect other domains of society and further investigation on "dimensions of social segregation, immigration policy, and the
intergenerational transfer of assets and liabilities” need to be conducted to truly understand the impact of structural racism on health inequities.\(^9\)

In navigating a multicultural environment, healthcare professionals may lack the requisite skills for effective communication and collaboration. This underscores the significance of cultural humility, especially in the realm of healthcare. While we cannot fully eliminate social determinants of health, the process of cultural humility is essential to decrease the inequity gap.

**CONCLUSION**

Cultural humility emerges as a crucial undertaking, particularly in healthcare. Healthcare providers must excel in delivering care to a culturally diverse clientele. Cultural humility promotes patient-centered care by recognizing and incorporating patients’ cultural beliefs, values, and practices into their treatment plans. This approach helps create a more personalized and effective healthcare experience while building trust, reducing healthcare disparities, improving communication, and increasing access to care. Promoting cultural humility as a core value equips healthcare professionals with crucial tools for deep self-reflection and ensuring their proficiency in delivering inclusive and equitable care within our diverse and dynamic societal context.

**REFERENCES**