

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT:** Assessing Cultural Proficiency of Healthcare Students

**STUDENT:** Ruby Cain

**DEGREE:** Doctor of Education

**COLLEGE:** Teachers College

**DATE:** May, 2009

**PAGES:** 152

Cancer is devastating. Medical advances have resulted in the ability to diagnose cancer at its earliest stages and increase survivorship. Unfortunately, Black Americans possess a disproportionate cancer burden, with the highest mortality and lowest survival rate of any racial/ethnic group. Lung cancer is the most deadly, yet most treatable cancer.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact that the healthcare education program had on healthcare students' level of cultural development and awareness of disparities regarding Black Americans and tobacco cessation. In light of the data substantiating that health disparities stem from a combination of racial and ethnic inequities in the access of the healthcare system, healthcare professionals' low levels of cultural development, and the missed opportunities for promoting Black American tobacco cessation, the following questions were developed to frame the research:

Research Question #1: How will the level of healthcare students' cultural development change as a result of a healthcare education program? This question corresponds to the following hypotheses being tested in this study:

Methods to answer this question included evaluation of findings from 1) comparison of pre and post-program *Inventory for Assessing the Process of Cultural Competence Among Healthcare Professionals – Revised* (IAPCC-R) mean scores by degree of study and by gender; and 3) comparison of pre and post-program *Tobacco Cessation Assessment* (TCA) mean scores by degree of study and by gender.

Research Question #2: What is the relationship between cultural competence and increased awareness of disparities regarding Black Americans and tobacco cessation?

Methods utilized to answer this question included evaluation of findings from comparison of results of knowledge gains in TCA vs. IAPCC-R mean scores, including using the Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine existence and strength of the relationship.

Findings were 1) level of cultural development increased; 2) awareness of disparities regarding Black Americans and tobacco cessation increased; and 3) weak, but statistically significant relationship between higher level of cultural development and increased awareness of disparities regarding Black Americans and tobacco cessation. This study could serve as a model for future partnerships with researchers, faculty, and healthcare professionals, linking pre-profession preparation with continuing professional education.