An integrated approach to HIV-related curriculum for physician's assistant students.

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The Department of Physician's Assistant Studies developed and implemented a curriculum to teach physician's assistant students about the didactic, clinical, and psychosocial aspects of HIV infection. Student attitudes about AIDS and AIDS patients were measured using the Shrum-Turner AIDS Attitude Questionnaire at various points in the program curricula. The object of the model curriculum has been not only to make physician's assistants students more knowledgeable about the pathophysiology, diagnosis, and prevention of AIDS diseases but to stimulate an awareness of the psychosocial consequences and implications of HIV infections as well. An integrated methodology was devised for the junior year curriculum which placed appropriate information in numerous existing courses beginning with the Patient Evaluation II and Problem Solving Techniques I and extending through the Preventive Medicine and Community Health and Human Dynamics III courses. For senior students, the materials were covered in several senior seminars at the end of clinical rotations. Senior students also participated in a 4-week rotation with direct clinical contact with HIV-infected patients. Prior to patient contact, all students are taught basic principles in pathophysiology, diagnosis, and treatment/prevention for care of patients with HIV infections. Results of the attitude survey will be utilized to make adjustments in the program curriculum.

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