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VIEWPOINT

Concordance Extremis

Audiey Kao, MD, PhD

- According to the 2000 Census, the total US population stood at 281,421,906. Of that total, 69.1 percent are white; 12.3 percent are black/African American; 12.5 percent are Hispanic/Latino; 3.6 percent are Asian; and 0.09 percent are American Indian/Alaskan Native¹.
- According to the American Medical Association, there are 812,713 physicians in the US. Among all US physicians, 75.3 percent are white; 3.6 percent are black/African American; 4.9 percent are Hispanic/Latino; 12.7 percent are Asian; and 0.0006 percent are American Indian/Alaskan Native².
- On average, a family practitioner has approximately 1,500 patients in his or her practice³.
- Some studies suggest that minority patients receive better care from physicians of a similar racial and ethnic background^{4, 5}. It is thought that minority patients are more trusting of minority physicians, which promotes improved patient-physician communication. Therefore, some who advocate for greater representative diversity of the physician workforce may support policies that promote concordance in race and ethnicity between patient and physician.
- If patient-physician racial/ethnic concordance were enacted today, it would mean that minority physicians would have patient panels that are several times larger than the current average. Extending patient-physician concordance to such extreme would not only be impractical, it would further reinforce, in a larger sense, that a color-blind society is not attainable.

References

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Audiey Kao, MD, PhD is editor in chief of *Virtual Mentor*.

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