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Knowledge Construction: Untapped Perspective in Pursuit for Health Equity

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ABSTRACT

Background: Racism is one of the major pathogenic social conditions that contribute to health disparity. Health disparities between blacks and whites are biological expressions of long-standing unjust social relationships. Health disparities between blacks and whites are explained not only in terms of differences in the socio-economic statuses but also by the impacts of epistemological racism. In health sciences, epistemological racism is manifested through the research questions asked, the research agendas framed, the ways in which data are collected and interpreted as well as the ways research funds are allocated. Often research questions are framed from the perspective of the researchers and the funders. Such a research mainly solves the socio-economic health problems of the researchers, funders and the dominant and leaves aside the need of the marginalized groups. Methods: Using Anti-racist theoretical framework I critically examine the connections between knowledge, race and health disparity between different racial groups and the pathogenicity of racism. Conclusion: Our health problems are unique to our culture and social realities. Research that is intended to reduce health disparities between racial minorities and the dominant groups need to frame research questions differently. Researchers need to realize that the contemporary epistemology of health sciences embodies the society that has produced it. Such knowledge has critical limitation in understanding the need of racial minorities and in finding solutions. To reduce health disparity we need to make the knowledge and experiences of different groups of people and their ways of knowing part of the educational curricula. School should prepare students to see the world primarily in their own perspective and define their needs and aspirations; facilitate conditions to widen their scope in understanding the world and solve their social problems.

KEYWORDS

Epistemological Racism; Health Disparity; Pathogenicity of Racism

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