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Debunking Medical Myths: Black Patients and Pain Tolerance

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**DEBUNKING MEDICAL MYTHS**

**Black Patients and Pain Tolerance**
False beliefs that black patients have a higher pain tolerance than white patients

### Racially based myths are common
58.1% (129/222) of medical students and residents believed that black patients have thicker skin than white patients.

### Myths cause direct harm
A literature review demonstrated that a lower percentage of black patients received analgesics than non-Hispanic white patients.

### False Beliefs

- >50% of surveyed physicians believe at least 1 false myth about Black patients.

### Error Rate of 15%
Medical providers who exhibited false beliefs of Black patients were less accurate in treatment recommendations 16% of the time.

### NO DIFFERENCE
Evaluation of pain perception finds no evidence of difference in pain intensity between Black and White patients.

### Related Explanations
Sociocultural factors can lead to patients of European descent reporting less pain than Black patients such as providers’ treatment decisions varying with patient ethnicity and pharmacies in minority neighborhoods being less likely to stock analgesics.

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**References**


7. Evaluation of pain perception finds no evidence of difference in pain intensity between Black and White patients.

8. Racially based myths are common...