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Behavioral sciences and medical education: The case of sociology

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Abstract

Sociology has played a central role in the behavioral sciences of medicine from the end of World War II to the present. Although the purpose of this article is to describe the current status of sociology in the medical schools of the United States, we consider it essential to examine first some of the historical origins. We begin, therefore, with a historical review, covering briefly four phases: antecedent studies which anticipated the post-war trend; the main period of intellectual trial, 1946–1955; pedagogical trial, 1955–1965; and evolving acceptance and integration, 1965–present. The discussion considers medical sociology both as a scholarly discipline and as a collaborating profession in medical education. Against this perspective, and drawing upon case studies collected specifically for this report, the major trends and issues in the current status of sociology in medical education are interpreted.



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