Survey Says...

Docs-to-be more willing to treat HIVers

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The next crop of docs is ready and willing to treat HIV positive patients, according to a new study in the Journal of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. And that's good news, said the journal's co-editor, Dr. Jocelyn White, since "the future care of people with HIV rests in the hands of today's medical students." Co-author Dr. Darren Carter, a resident in family medicine at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital, said the survey of first-year med students presented "radically different" results from earlier ones: Ninety-two percent of future MDs would welcome HIV patients into their practice, compared to about 60 percent a decade ago. Carter and his colleague, Dr. Laura Weiss Roberts, surveyed students at the University of Chicago and the University of New Mexico, and despite the schools' very different ethnic and demographic makeups, the final results were remarkably similar. One in five said caring for people with HIV was the reason they decided to study medicine; the strongest factor in their willingness to treat patients with HIV was a sense of professional obligation. Carter is planning another study to determine whether docs-to-be develop HIV aversion by senior year.

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