

# Multicultural Genetic Counseling

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## Background/Introduction

- Multicultural issues and diversity are known to be important in the field of counseling psychology (Corey, 2009).
- An understanding and awareness of diversity and multicultural issues and how they impact the process of genetic counseling specifically is important.
- Currently, cultural competency is part of the requirements to obtain certification as a genetic counselor from the American Board of Genetic Counseling and all accredited Genetic counseling masters programs have some form of multicultural counseling education (Lewis, 2002).
- Today in genetic counseling much of the knowledge of being an effective and understanding multicultural counselor comes from experience in working with a variety of clients and learning directly from experience (Weil, 2001).
- There is a wide variety in the type of training genetic counselors receive depending on the program they are in (Lewis, 2002).
- Race or ethnicity tend to be the main thoughts that come to mind when thinking of multicultural issues and culture, yet culture is much more than just those aspects. Other aspects of culture include gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and religious views to name a few (Corey, 2009).
- With the ever-increasing diversity of our country more and more emphasis is being put on educating counselors on multicultural topics and how they influence the counseling process.
- A textbook devoted to all aspects of diversity and multicultural issues in genetic counseling would be a great resource for all genetic counselors and would help to educate and further improve the effectiveness of genetic counseling.

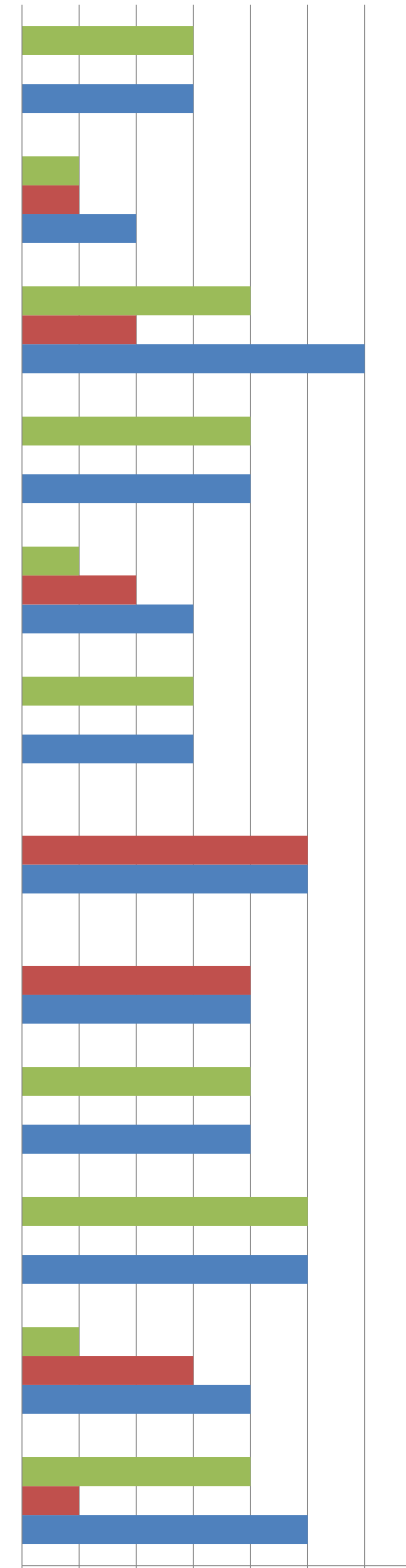
## Purpose

Conduct a preliminary investigation of multicultural issues and diversity in Genetic Counseling by searching for literature relevant to this topic. Currently, Bonnie LeRoy, my faculty mentor for this project and the director of the genetic counseling program here at the University of Minnesota is planning to write a text book on multicultural genetic counseling with Pat McCarthy Veach, professor of Educational Psychology and Associate Director for Research in the genetic counseling program. My project is to help in their endeavor in an exploratory research effort that will gather necessary resources related to the subject.

Goals:

- To establish a better understanding of the prevalence of journal articles, research and other sources concerning diversity in genetic counseling.
- To identify specific sources and potential authors to be used for a multicultural genetic counseling textbook. Specifically, on the following 12 topics:
  - ✧ Gender
  - ✧ Race/Ethnicity
  - ✧ Sexual Orientation/Lifestyle
  - ✧ Poverty, International/Transnational
  - ✧ Diversity in the Profession
  - ✧ Multicultural Supervision
  - ✧ The Culture of Living with a Genetic Condition/Disability
  - ✧ Multicultural Curricular Pedagogy
  - ✧ Religion/Philosophical Beliefs
  - ✧ Values/Value Conflicts
  - ✧ Defining Culture/Diversity/Models of Multicultural Practice.

- To determine where information and research is lacking in regards to multicultural genetic counseling.



## References

- Corey, G. (2009). *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.
- Weil J (2001) Multicultural education and genetic counseling. *Clin Genet* 59:143–149.
- Lewis, L. (2002). Models of Genetic Counseling and Their Effects on Multicultural Genetic Counseling. *Journal of Genetic Counseling* 11:193-212.

## Methods

- Search Databases for scholarly journal article that could be used as sources for the writing of a Multicultural Genetic counseling textbook.

Searches were conducted using Springer Link and PsycNet Databases:

- Springer Link was used to Search for articles from The Journal of Genetic Counseling
  - PsycNet was used to search for articles from various Psychology Journals
- Search criteria:
- Journal Articles only
  - Articles published within last five years
  - Exclude prominent authors (ie, Sue and Sue, Lewis) and mentors (LeRoy and Veach)
  - When searching Springer Link only searching the Journal of Genetic Counseling

- Obtain 1-5 articles on each of the 12 topics previously stated in the Purpose
- Read articles and write a short summary on relevant articles.
- Develop a list of sources and article summaries including names of possible people to contribute to writing the textbook.

Data Analysis:

- Identify topics for which articles were not found
- Not found using both Databases
- Not found using PsycNet
- Not found in The Journal of Genetic Counseling

## Results

- A list of 48 articles along with brief summaries was compiled
- The list included 18 articles from the Journal of Genetic Counseling and 30 articles from the PsycNet Database
- Very few relevant articles were found related to the topic of values and value conflict
- No relevant articles were found from the PsycNet Database related to the topics of Diversity in the Profession and International/Transnational
- No relevant articles were found in the Journal of Genetic Counseling related to the topics of Sexual Orientation/Lifestyle, Poverty, Multicultural Supervision, Multicultural Curricular Pedagogy and Defining Culture/Diversity/Models of Multicultural Practice

## Conclusions/Discussion

- Results confirmed the importance of Multicultural Issues in Genetic Counseling
- Results showed that there is a lack of research directly related to Genetic Counseling in various topics pertaining to diversity and multicultural counseling including, Sexual orientation/Lifestyle, Poverty, Multicultural Supervision, Religion/Philosophical Beliefs, Values/Value Conflict, and Defining Culture/Diversity/Models of Multicultural Practice
- The topic of age came up in various articles and searches and may be another possible topic to include
- Study limitations:
  - Only two databases (PsycNet and SpringerLink) were used to search for articles
  - Search criteria excluded articles that were more than 5 years old and excluded prominent authors on the subject
  - Articles were limited to those relating to the 12 topics listed previously and did not include other aspects of diversity or multicultural issues.
- Further Research Recommendations:
  - Use other Databases to search for relevant articles in other journals
  - Include other aspects of diversity such as age into the topics
  - Conduct studies in genetic counseling that examine the topics that showed a lack of research (see those listed above in the conclusions)