will be done to ensure that they always get the best care available, and that their caregivers will serve as their advocates. Third, interpersonal skills and communication techniques that demonstrate honesty, openness, compassion, and respect on the part of the health care provider are essential tools in dismantling mistrust. Finally, patients indicate that trust is built when there is shared, participatory decision-making and the provider makes a concerted effort to understand the patient's background. When the doctor–patient relationship is reframed as one of solidarity, the patient's sense of vulnerability can be transformed into one of trust. The successful elimination of disparities requires trust-building interventions and strengthening of this relationship.

CONCLUSION

The issue of racial and ethnic disparities in health care has gained national prominence, both with the release of the IOM report *Unequal Treatment* and with more recent articles that have confirmed their persistence and explored their root causes. Furthermore, another influential IOM report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm*, has highlighted the importance of equity—i.e., no variations in quality of care due to personal characteristics, including race and ethnicity—as a central principle of quality. Current efforts in health care reform and transformation, including a greater focus on value (high-quality care and cost-control), will sharpen the nation's focus on the care of populations who experience low-quality, costly care. Addressing disparities will become a major focus, and there will be many obvious opportunities for interventions to eliminate them. Greater attention to addressing the root causes of disparities will improve the care provided to all patients, not just those who belong to racial and ethnic minorities.

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