

NIH teacher resources feature rare diseases and evolution

November 3 2011

Teachers now have an innovative way to help students approach challenging biology questions with two new free curriculum supplements from the National Institutes of Health: Evolution and Medicine, and Rare Diseases and Scientific Inquiry. Both supplements inform students about human health, while helping them build their problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and teamwork skills.

Teachers can easily integrate the supplements into their classes' explorations of complex topics such as the need for yearly flu vaccines, the geographical differences in rates of lactose intolerance, pros and cons of clinical trials for kids with cancer, and reasons why certain people contract [rare diseases](#). These are the latest installments in a popular NIH series aligned with state and national education standards and designed to promote inquiry-based, interdisciplinary learning and stimulate student interest in science.

The supplements were developed by leading scientists, educators, and curriculum experts, and combine cutting-edge medical research discoveries with state-of-the-art instructional materials. Each has a self-contained teacher's guide consisting of five lessons on science and human health and including online virtual labs, videos, and simulations. Educators have requested more than 400,000 supplements in the series from NIH, the federal focal point for medical research.

Evolution and Medicine, for grades 9–12, helps students use scientific inquiry in the context of medicine to understand evolutionary principles.

Students will learn how evolution is part of our knowledge of human health, biomedical processes, and disease treatment. To request Evolution and Medicine, visit science.education.nih.gov/q7 .

"Evolution's signature is written all over our genomes and is manifested throughout our bodies," says Irene Eckstrand, Ph.D., an NIH expert on evolution who helped develop the curriculum. "[Evolution](#) and Medicine explains the basic principles of evolutionary biology using new and well-researched examples drawn from current medical research."

Rare Diseases and Scientific Inquiry, for grades 6–8, helps students explore how scientists research rare diseases and treatments and learn more about the workings of the human body. To request Rare Diseases and Scientific Inquiry, visit science.education.nih.gov/r7 .

"The curriculum supplement will raise student awareness of rare diseases, including where to go for accurate information," according to Stephen Groft, Pharm.D., director, Office of Rare Diseases Research, NIH. "We believe that the information provided in Rare Diseases will help eliminate the feeling of isolation and stigmatization felt by many [students](#) with rare diseases."

Provided by National Institutes of Health

Citation: NIH teacher resources feature rare diseases and evolution (2011, November 3) retrieved 23 April 2024 from

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