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**Abstract**

Department of Health policy currently espouses shared learning between the various health 'tribes'. There are many cogent arguments for this; however, there may be unaddressed tensions because of status differences between the disciplines. This paper compares two of the main academic disciplines involved ? nursing, a recent entrant to higher education, and its much longer established neighbour, medicine, with the emphasis in the paper being on nursing. The paper explores the differences in cultural capital between medicine and nursing, the vastly different research funding and the government intervention in curriculum issues in nursing, drawing on empirical data on the social class of entrants to medicine and nursing, the league table ranking of the universities in which they are based, and data from the Research Assessment Exercises. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)