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Latino Communities and the Health System

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Authors note

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Abstract:

This research project is to give an insight into the relationship between Latinos in both careers and lifestyle. There are thousands of graduates each year into the medical field; yet the percentage of those of Latino descent is below average. This research paper will show the involvement of Latino communities within the medical field. The reasons why the percentage of those in the field is lower than that of any other ethnicity. Surveys of Latino culture would suggest that many feel that the Healthcare system doesn't satisfy their needs and institution rates of Latino medical graduates is significantly lower. This is of big significance due to Latinos being 17% of the United States population and will continue to rise. Throughout the project the struggle Latino medical students will be noticed and the healthcare system that these communities are involved with will become apparent.

Keywords: Health, Education, and Communities

Latino Communities and the Health System

Latinx students are underrepresented in the United States and so is the health community. Students are lacking the drive for education and are not encouraged to go to a university; the medical Latino students graduation rates are low. The lack of health representation coming from the Latino communities is saddening. There are not enough Latinx physicians for the amount of Latinx in the United States. This is causing a lack of medical treatment for these communities and families in fear of receiving poor treatment. Throughout this paper graduation rates of Latinx medical students will become aware, how Latinx view themselves in the medical field, and the lack of representation in Latinx communities will be shown.

Graduation rates of Latinx students seems to be underrepresented; “688,000 physicians practicing medicine in 2012, more than 9% were from an underrepresented minority, including 5.2% who were Hispanic” (Johnson) this shows that that out of 688 thousand physicians only 5% were Hispanic; which demonstrates a lack of representation in the medical field. The Hispanic community is poorly represented in the United States. Students are showing statistically that they lack the drive to complete a higher education. “16,800 medical school students who graduated in 2012, 7.4% were Hispanic” (Johnson) It is concerning that only 7.4% of the students were Hispanic.

There are many factors to help support the lack of a higher education about the Latinx community. Students who have a lower economic status often feel discouraged and have lack of drive. The lack of knowledge or resources causes students not to pursue a higher education. Having the right school is also a major factor; being a Latino student often separates you from the teacher and creates weak bond. Schools are a big influence on students; teachers often are the

main influencers in helping encourage students to get a higher education. If a teacher doesn't help every student equally meaning that the boundaries that are caused by language and economic status or other reasons could mean a student won't have the confidence to apply to college.

“First, 44 million Latinos now represent the largest minority group in the United States, nearly two-thirds of whom are of Mexican origin (Pew Hispanic Center 2006; U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Second, U.S. Latinos have the highest dropout rate of all the major racial/ethnic groups (U.S. Census Bureau 2005), and youths of Mexican descent are especially susceptible to not completing school (Valencia 2002). Third, previous studies have illuminated considerable differences in educational experiences and outcomes among Latinos “(Robert page 111)

Hispanics are some of the least educated in the United States. “More than one-fourth of Hispanic adults have less than a ninth-grade education”(Barbara) thus the lack of knowledge and the less education Latinxs have; means the chances of finding a substantial job is less. The statistics are showing that families and educators are the biggest influence on these Latinx students; having stereotypes against this minority and not having the proper programs for these students could be the cause of students not completing an education. These society struggles are holding the Latino community back and the lack of representation of this group is evidence.

The Latino community in the medical field feels poorly represented. In our country it is more likely to have a doctor of a different ethnicity than of your own. Many Hispanics feel that they would get better treatment by someone of the same decent than of someone of another (Johnson). It was stated “foreign-born and less-assimilated Latinos—those who mainly speak Spanish, who lack U.S. citizenship, or who have been in the United States for a short time—are

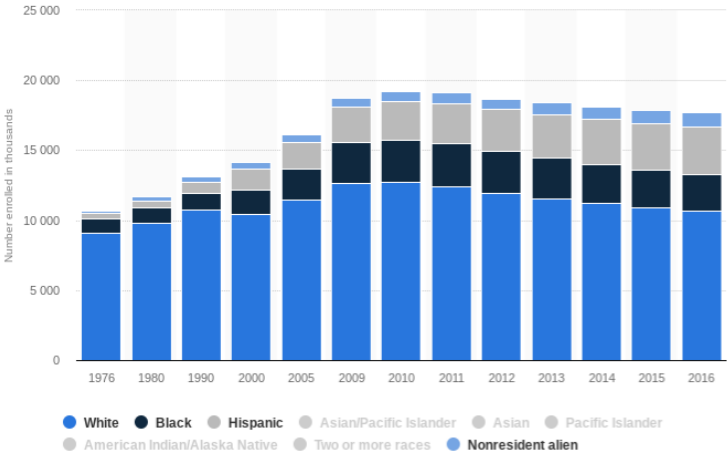
less likely than other Latinos to report that they have a usual place to go for medical treatment or advice”(Gretchen) Latinos feel that their current living situations keep them from seeing medical professionals. Young, uneducated, or undocumented are the most likely to avoid going to a health care provider; there are many reasons that this could be but the main reason being that there is a fear of being deported. This also includes those who lack insurance or are low income families; some families just cannot afford to visit the doctor for treatment or medical advice because many immigrants have very low income/wages. Although Latinos don’t use the information they are provided many would say that they are satisfied with their care. But some have reported poor medical treatment and claim that their race/ethnicity, language barriers, or financial status were all factors in how one was treated: “Latinos tend to have worse access to health care, experience worse morbidity as a result of lack of care or treatment, and receive poorer quality care when compared with non-Latino whites”

Some studies show that “83 percent report obtaining at least some information about health and health care from television, radio, newspapers, magazines or the internet in the past year.” a majority gain health information through media rather than a professional. The availability for healthcare professionals varies. Although the healthcare varies there are still options for these communities. But fear of being deported or being poorly treated is the largest reason media is used rather than in person communication. If one cannot gain insurance or is undocumented they are less likely to get the help that is needed. Financial status is another reason for the lack health care provided in the Hispanic community. Although these shouldn’t be the main factors many Latinos surveyed stated that the lack of financial stability and their racial ethnicity were taken into account.

Number of undergraduate students enrolled in

Figure 1.1

Figure 1.1 shows the amount of Latino students enrolled in a undergraduate program from the time period



1967 to 2016. In 1976 roughly 383.8 thousand were enrolled while in 2016 3426.8 were enrolled in a higher education. This is a significant change in the last 40 years; this is evidence of improvement in the latinx students. They are beginning to become more confident and are being encouraged to invest in a higher education. But this still cannot compare to the Caucasian students; they have had a steady enrollment rate throughout the past 40 years. This shows that Latinx communities face more society struggles than other students.

"In 1980, there were 135 Latino physicians for every 100,000 Latinos in the U.S.; by 2010, that figure had dropped to just 105 per 100,000. Meanwhile, the national rate of non-Hispanic white physicians increased from 211 for every 100,000 non-Hispanic whites to 315 per 100,000." (Rivero) The physician to population ratio is of great importance; this shows the medical representation for the Latino community. The statistic shows that the Latino physician to population ratio had been decreasing since 2010 while the non-Hispanic white ratio has increased. The non-Hispanic ratio is three times the amount of the Latino ration; the fact is that the Latino population is rising in the United States but the physician rate is decreasing. Students

Distribution of Medical School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

are losing confidence and are feeling too discouraged to finish an education.

Figure 1.2

In Figure 1.2 is a table with the “ distribution of medical school graduates by race/ ethnicity”. There are four states listed those being New York, Oregon, California, and Washington states; there is

Location	Hispanic
United States ¹	4.6%
California	6.9%
New York	4.4%
Oregon	1.6%
Washington	3.7%

also the United States average. The average in the United States is 4.6 % of the whole population; meaning that only 4.6% of the whole population are medical school graduates who are hispanic. Oregon being the lowest with 1.6% and California being the highest with 6.9%. None of the states listed made it to double digits. This suggests that the latino medical community is very underrepresented and the medical graduation rate is very low.

In conclusion latinx students are encouraged and have no drive to complete a higher education. The schools that latino communities attend are major influences on the students. If the school is not bilingual than there are barriers getting in the way of students achieving an education. Teachers and guardians of the students have to give the students the confidence to complete an education and to push themselves rather than dull themselves to the latino stereotypes. The graduation rates for latinx medical students is very low. The average medical school graduation rate is only 4.6% of the entire population. Although the medical school graduation rate is low; The latino students are beginning to pursue higher education. As i showed in figure 1.1 the amount of latino students has significantly increased over the past 40 years.

There is no representation for the latino medical community; the ratio of latino physicians to the latino population is very low. This is keeping latino communities away from the healthcare system and leaving many people without treatment. There is fear of getting deported due to these communities living situations or there citizenship status. Therefore many of theses communities resort to media for medical information rather than professionals. Overall the latino health representation could be improved and the information proves that. The graduation rates for medical schools are low and the students are not having the confidence to gain a higher education. The latinx students have many factors to why they may not finish school; but everything that was stated could be improved.

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