Systemic Racism, Disparities & COVID-19: Impacts on Latino Health

What is systemic racism?

The way policies & practices of organizations or systems advantage some populations, while disadvantaging others, creating different outcomes for different racial & ethnic groups.

What factors put Latinos at high risk of contracting COVID-19?

- Systemic racism
- Language Barriers: Impact health literacy and create a barrier to care, testing & treatment
- Multi-Generational Homes: More likely to live in multi-generational homes, potentially exposing older family members
- Immigration Concerns: Individuals may be reluctant to report infection or seek care due to immigration status
- Multi-Generational Homes: More likely to live in multi-generational homes, potentially exposing older family members

Language Barriers

Impact health literacy and create a barrier to care, testing & treatment

Latinos comprise large portions of the essential workforce

1/3 of agricultural workers are Latino
1/4 of workers in food marketing, scholarship, and service are Latino

Less likely to have access to health insurance

Latinos saw the largest percentage point decrease in their uninsured rate with the Affordable Care Act. Yet the Latino uninsured rate is still 2.5 times higher than the rate for whites.

Lack of representation in the health workforce contributes to language and cultural barriers to care

5.8% of physicians identified as Latino
5.5% of medical school faculty were Latino
6.0% of psychologists identified as Latino
6.2% of medical school applicants were Latino

A 2015 survey found that 5.5% of all psychologists—regardless of race/ethnicity—could provide services in Spanish.

What impact does the pandemic have on existing social & economic inequities?

Harder hit by the economic downturn

49% of Latinos say they or someone in their household has taken a pay cut or lost a job—or both—as a result of the pandemic, compared with 33% of all U.S. adults.

Immigrants and their families have limited access to COVID-19 employment benefits.

Steps to address economic and social challenges:

- Improve access to culturally competent care
- Increase workforce representation
- Increase educational opportunities
- Increase opportunities for self protection & prevention
- Support school health programs
- Support childcare & paid sick leave
- Improve access to child care
- Increase opportunities for economic growth
- Work within the community to build trust

Steps to take within the health care space:

- Increase bi-directional health literacy
- Support school health programs
- Increase access to child care
- Increase opportunities for economic growth
- Work within the community to build trust

Strategies for Change

- Increasing Risk of Food Insecurity: Ongoing school closures and economic downturn have increased challenges accessing food
- Increasing Risk of Housing Insecurity: The pandemic-related economic downturn has increased housing insecurity

What is the Latino and Hispanic community? It is not monolithic and encompasses a diverse group of individuals.

Latinos account for 18.5% of the US population
But only 5.0% of psychologists identified as Latino
Latinas make up 44% of COVID-19 cases in pregnant women
Latinos are hospitalized from the virus at 4.6x the rate of White people
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