

## **Latinidad y Antirracismo: Fostering Antiracist Conversations in Medical Education**

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### **Educational Objectives**

By the end of this activity, learners will be able to:

1. Develop antiracist healthcare workforce by increasing foundational awareness of health equity issues specific to the Hispanic/Latino/x community.
2. Develop upstanders that choose to intervene in situations where racism, discrimination, and microaggressions are present.
3. Describe concepts associated with antiracism, equity, diversity, and inclusion so that trainees speak a foundational common language.
4. Practice antiracist terminology in Spanish and associate this language with medical Spanish skills.

### **Abstract**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the lecture series was to create a space for Hispanic/Latino/x learners to share their experiences and critically examine their own culture. In addition, an open invitation created a space for other minoritized and majority students to learn and engage in conversation. This series engages on a topic that is less discussed, racism in Hispanic/Latino/x communities.

#### **Methods**

This project consisted of three (3) virtual interactive sessions. Learners did not require prerequisite knowledge; however, we created a discussion guide, *Glosario de Términos Asociados con Racismo*, that served as a point of reference for students to use throughout the series. Participants rated their familiarity pre and post each session via survey.

#### **Results**

In total, 22 responses were received to the post-survey (n = 22). After all the presentations, 100% of the participants reported acquiring new information. Ten out of 22 participants informed that they learned a 'great deal of new information. Furthermore, 95.45% of participants would recommend participating in the interactive sessions with a colleague.

## Discussion

Through these sessions, we reflected on what it means to be Hispanic/Latino/x, how discrimination exists within the cultures that fall under this umbrella term, how they fit (and often do not fit) in the U.S. social construct of the term regardless of our geographical location, and how their identities are further complicated by intersectionality. We have created the precedent for future medical students to continue having and expanding on these conversations, to further provide nuance as to what it really means to “be” Hispanic/Latino/x.

## Introduction

The path that leads to medical school is, unfortunately, extremely challenging for most minoritized students. There is a universal low representation of students of color in educational institutions, but more severely in STEM and medical fields.<sup>1</sup> The lack of diversity and representation makes it difficult for individuals to conserve, and more importantly, celebrate their own cultures.

It is important to note that we have chosen to use the terms: *Hispanic/Latino/x* as a reference to this collection of cultures. This use comes with a full understanding that during many decades theoretical, epistemological and identity studies have used: Hispanic, Latino, Latin@, Latine, and Latinx terms.<sup>2</sup> Our use does not dismiss or critiques these terms. We also define *Latinidad* as the concept of cultural unity and a source of resistance.

Progress has been made and efforts have been in place, mostly by people of color themselves, to raise awareness of the inequality that Hispanic/Latino/x have faced.<sup>1</sup> However, even when institutions attempt to celebrate different cultures and encourage diversity, the Hispanic/Latino/x cultures are portrayed as a monolith, with very few distinctions being made between individual cultures, including those who were born and raised in the United States. This lack of nuance has created a barrier for those who do not identify themselves with the artificial conception of the appearance or behavior of a Hispanic/Latino/x individual; a conception that was mostly created by non-minoritized individuals. Furthermore, the lack of nuance has also led to a “crisis of identity” in which Hispanic/Latino/x students question their sense of belonging to their own culture as determined by U.S. societal norms. This has created introspection from the Hispanic/Latino/x community in the medical field and questions the collective and dilution of Hispanic/Latino/x voices.

The purpose of the “Hablemos de Racismo (Let’s talk about color): Intersections of Race & Latinidad”, lecture series was to create a safe, brave, and open space for Hispanic/Latino/x individuals to share their experiences and cultures, how their identity has been questioned by themselves and by others, discuss what *Latinidad* means along with the terminology used when talking about race and racism within the Hispanic/Latino/x community and Spanish-speakers. The goal is to show Hispanic/Latino/x medical students that their individual identities are valid and worth celebrating. The authors believe that this will lead to a breakdown of the barriers that separate the community and aggrandize the voices that seek to create equality among our minoritized and non-minoritized colleagues. Furthermore, this lecture series served as a testament for the institution and the rest of the student body and faculty, that the Hispanic/Latino/x culture is not a monolith and deserves nuanced representation.

This series engages on a topic that is less discussed, racism in Hispanic/Latino/x communities, its effects in health equity and medical education. This work elevates medical Spanish courses and materials<sup>3-5</sup>, and invites deeper discussions about specific cultural groups.<sup>6</sup>

## Methods

The series, which we titled “Hablemos de Racismo: Intersections of Race & Latinidad,” provided a safe outlet for learning and discussing with medical students and other members of the medical education community. The three-part virtual series was organized by the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) Student Interest Group (SIG) and the Medical Spanish SIG as extracurricular events. Indiana University’s chapter of LMSA’s mission is to unite, empower and advocate for the health of Hispanic/Latino/x medical students and the Hispanic community of

Indiana by providing mentorship, creating and participating in community service opportunities, furthering the education, and elevating the voices that advocate for the rights of all underrepresented groups. Medical Spanish SIG aims to improve medical care for the Hispanic/Latino/x community by refining language ability and building cultural humility in bilingual future healthcare professionals. Mr. Bolivar led the local LMSA chapter at the time the events took place. As a medical student, Dr. Hentz led the Medical Spanish SIG. Dr. Hernandez-Mondragón serves as mentor and the primary sponsor for both SIGs. Dr. Sotto-Santiago and Hernandez-Mondragón also teach in the Enlace program, a competitive 4-year longitudinal Spanish immersion medical education continuum which begins with Foundation of Clinical Practice-fully bilingual course.

As outlined below, the events took place over the course of three months (September through November 2020), with each event lasting approximately 1.5 hrs. Events were held online utilizing Zoom platform for the dual purpose of maintaining safety during the pandemic and to reach a broader audience over multiple campuses throughout the state of Indiana. The series was advertised by emails to the Foundations of Clinical Practice-Spanish immersion longitudinal program, SIG listservs, social media including Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) Facebook student page and LMSA Instagram profile @lmsa\_iusm.

***Hablemos de Racismo: Intersections of Race & Latinidad Series Schedule:***

- Event 1: Intro to Racismo y Cómo Hablar de Ello (Introduction to Racism and How to Talk About It)
- Event 2: Being Latino in the U.S.
- Event 3: Discussing Afro-Latinidad

***Intro to Racismo y Cómo Hablar de Ello***

Prerequisite knowledge about the topics was not required; however, we created a document to guide discussion during the first event of the series (*Intro to Racismo y Cómo Hablar de Ello*). This guide, *Glosario de Términos Asociados con Racismo* (Appendix A), also served as a point of reference for students to use throughout the series. It is a living document, shared and editable so that students might add new terms as they furthered their knowledge on these topics. This session was guided by Dr. Sotto-Santiago. The session outlined the agenda and points of discussion followed by open conversation with active participation of the audience.

This session included the following agenda:

- Define Racismo, Mestizaje, Colonialismo (Colonialism and Colonization), and Colorismo (Colorism)
- Examples of Racismo and how it presents itself in Hispanic/Latino/x cultures
  - Estándares de belleza (Beauty Standards, concept of “White Passing”),
  - Clase, Apellidos y Educación (Investigate class through last names and education levels),
  - Clase política (explores politics as social status)
- Exploring Latinidad identity. In this section, we explore the origins of the concepts/words: Hispanic, Latino, Latinx
- Discussion of *Glosario de Términos Asociados con Racismo* (Appendix A)
- Discussion on how racismo impacts Hispanic/Latino/x patient care
- Discussion on the experiences of Hispanic/Latino/x faculty in academic medicine and how to succeed
  - Linguistic accents and discrimination

***Being a Latino in the U.S.***

The second event, *Being a Latino in the U.S.*, was a moderated panel discussion with residents (Anesthesia, Critical Care, Pediatrics) and students (MS1-MS4) who wished to share their experiences. Goals for this event included fostering community within medicine as well as helping non-Hispanic/Latino/x peers to gain insight into the complexities of what Hispanic/Latino/x can encompass for those living in the U.S. This included themes such as

dueling identities and reconciling multifaceted backgrounds. The opening discussion centered on the following questions: How is our culture represented in medicine? How do Latino/x access care and what barriers they may face? This session was led by Mr. Bolivar (MS3 during fall 2020) and Dr. Hentz (MS4 during fall 2020).

Questions for panelists:

- Please share with us your story.
  - Where were you born? Where did you grow up? What is your first language? Where is home for you?
- When someone asks you “where are you from?” what do you say?
- Have you ever felt like your “Latinidad” was questioned by someone else? Give us an example.
- Have you ever questioned your own identity as a member of the Hispanic/Latino/x? Why?
- Have you ever felt the need to be more outspoken about your culture around others? Why?

### ***Discussing Afro-Latinidad***

*Discussing Afro-Latinidad* rounded out the series with a presentation and Q&A session by Dr. Jasmine Haywood and moderated by Dr. Sotto-Santiago. The session reviewed how Anti-Blackness manifests in the Latino community broadly and delved deeper into the lived experiences of Afro-Latinos in the US.<sup>7</sup> The presenter concluded with takeaways on how students can work towards dismantling Anti-Black Latinx racism.

The session comprised the following topics:

- Defining Anti-Black Racism
- How Anti-Blackness Manifests in the Latino Community
- Examples from the Research: Anti-Black Latinx Racism in Higher Education
- Dismantling Anti-Black Latinx Racism

### **Overall Series**

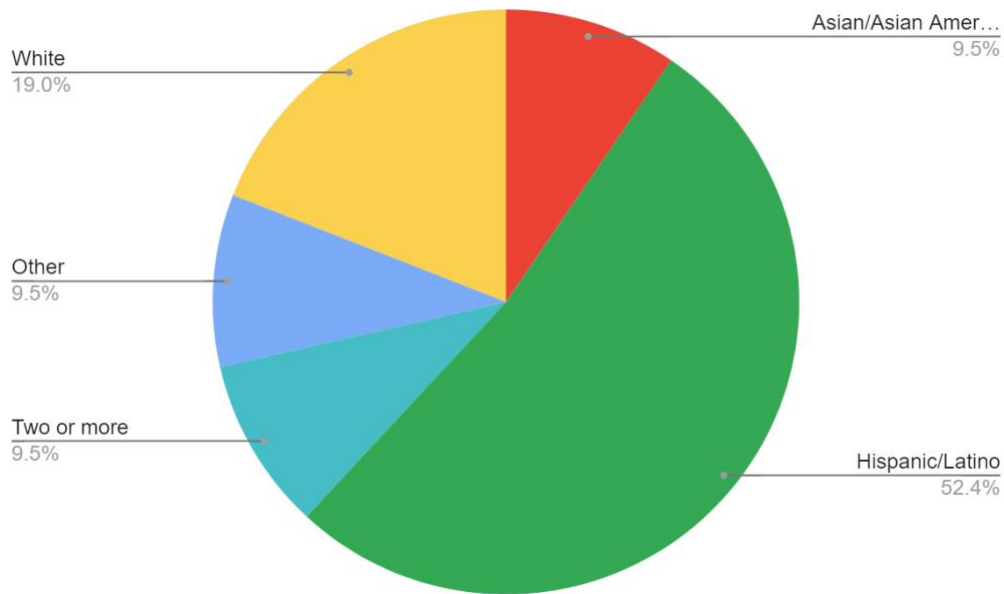
This series was facilitated by medical student-leaders with the support of faculty members. As in other workshops that center on race and ethnicity, we encourage facilitators with collective training and expertise in equity and inclusion topics, critical/difficult conversations, and academic medicine and health care.<sup>8</sup> The facilitators were self-aware and reflective individuals who approached this series with thoughtfulness and care. The positionality of faculty members also includes Hispanic/Latino/x identities with a connection to the countries of Honduras (RHM) and Puerto Rico (SSS).

In order to evaluate the series, we created a survey with Qualtrics (Appendix B). This survey aimed to capture audience demographics, level of comfort with topics presented, and suggestions for improvement of future programming. Participants rated their comfort level discussing race and racism, ethnicity, identity, and issues impacting the Hispanic/Latino/a/x community. This single survey was used for all events and allowed participants to indicate which event(s) they had attended. This facilitated comparison between results from each event, and a collective evaluation. Electronic survey distribution took place at the end of each event as well as in a follow-up email for participants.

### **Results**

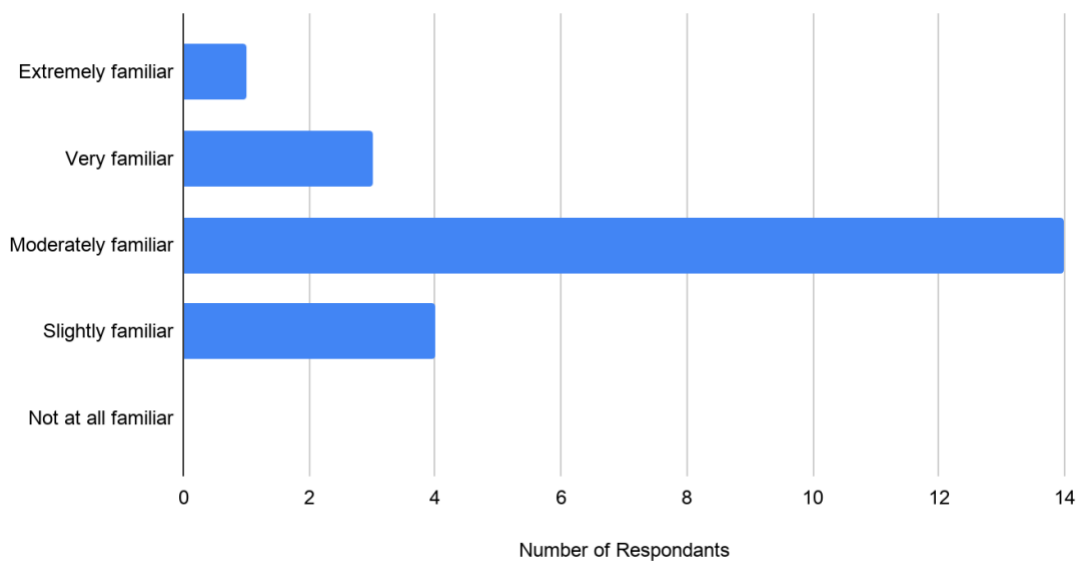
Approximately 35 students and residents attended one or more events in the series. In total, 22 responses were received to the post-survey (n = 22, 63% response). Respondents identified as Hispanic/Latino/x (52.4%), White (19.1%), Asian/Asian American (9.5%), two or more (9.5%), or other (9.5%) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Participant Demographics: *What race/ethnicity do you identify with?*

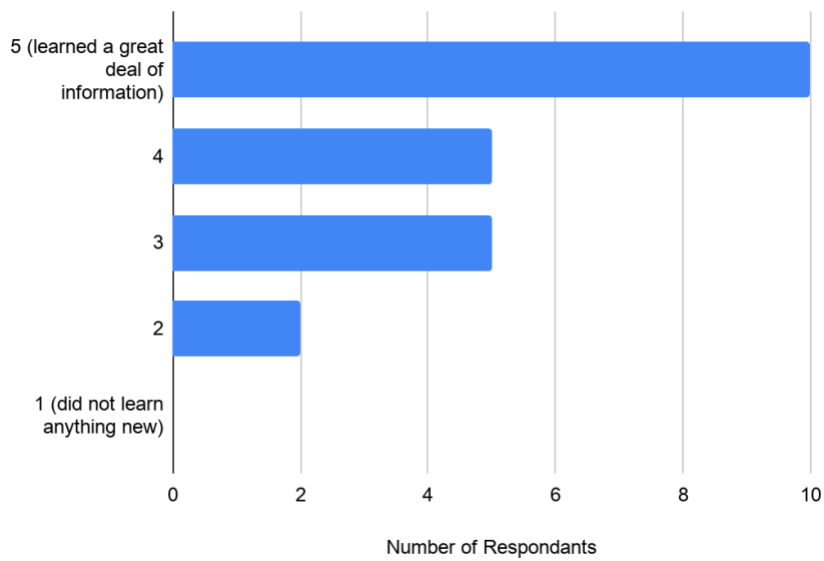


Prior to the presentations, only 4 participants stated that they felt either extremely or very familiar with the subject being presented (Figure 2). After all the presentations, 100% of the participants reported acquiring new information in the subject matter. Also, 10 out of 22 participants informed that they learned a 'great deal' of new information (Figure 3). Furthermore, 95.45% of participants would recommend participating in the interactive sessions to a colleague.

**Figure 2:** Familiarity with Materials Presented: *Prior to this program, how familiar were you with the material presented?*



**Figure 3:** Post-session Knowledge: *How much information did you learn from this program?*



Participants recommended more time for questions and inviting more speakers in the future to improve the program. Participants listed several favorite parts of the program, including panelists and presenters, open participation/firsthand experiences being shared, as well as a few specific topics. Lastly, participants had a diverse range of definitions for Latinidad or Hispanidad after the sessions, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Responses to “What does Latinidad or Hispanidad mean to you?”

Culture	<p>“Culture,”</p> <p>“Cultural identity,”</p> <p>“It is a cultural identity associated loosely with Latin American Countries (not a race)”</p>
Geographic	<p>“Having a background from Latin America”</p> <p>“Maybe too general, but someone from latin america.”</p> <p>“It means being of latin nationality”</p>
Common elements of culture	<p>“It means having a similar culture, customs and language”</p> <p>“A community of people with backgrounds that are different but share common elements of language and culture”</p> <p>“Community”</p>
Hispanic	<p>“Hispanic culture”</p> <p>“People identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x”</p>

Single answers	How you identify yourself in a holistic sense (which could mean embracing your roots or embracing the culture/country with which you identify yourself as).
	<p>“comiendo mangu, tres leches, y croquetas diariamente. al lado de bromar, siendo orgulloso de mis raíces”</p> <p>[“eating mangu, tres leches, and croquetas daily. A side from joking all the time, and being proud of my roots/ancestors.”]</p>
	“A beautiful culture that I'm a part of”

**Discussion**

The series of interactive sessions that took place at Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) represented an incredible first step in the inclusion of Hispanic/Latino/x voices in the conversation about race and racism. We consider this exercise as a critical exercise in the development of an antiracist healthcare workforce increasing awareness and health equity issues specific to the Hispanic/Latino/x community. Through these sessions, we reflected how Hispanic/Latino/x are discriminated against even within the cultures that fall under this umbrella, and how identities as Hispanic/Latino/x are further complicated by intersectionality. We have created the precedent for following generations of medical students to continue having and expanding on these conversations, to further provide nuance as to what it really means to be Hispanic/Latino/x.

Based on the results of the post-survey, every participant of the interactive sessions acquired new knowledge regarding Hispanic/Latino/x experiences in the US medical education system and a significant majority acquired a great deal of information. As we described concepts associated with antiracism, equity, diversity, and inclusion, participants can speak the same foundational language. This demonstrates the importance of student-led interactive sessions in creating conversations and spreading knowledge regarding the topic of diversity and creating nuance when referring to *Latinidad*.

One of the most interesting outcomes of this conversation was the notion that within members of the community, individuals identified based on heritage or country of origin. Again, emphasizing that the terms Hispanic/Latino/x have been socially constructed in the U.S. This coincides with the findings of scholars in higher education who suggest that disaggregating the Hispanic/Latino/x population by country of origin or heritage may reveal a deeper story. In addition, how the term itself, Hispanic/Latino/x erases individuals representing Belize, Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, as well as numerous indigenous representations across the Americas.<sup>9</sup>

Many participants enjoyed hearing from their classmates’ personal experiences and noted that the discussion format was helpful. When implementing future events like this, although one goal will be to increase attendance, it will be important to utilize breakout sessions or other strategies to continue fostering small group conversations.

The majority of the students participating identified as Hispanic/Latino/X demonstrating student desire to participate in a safe environment to share knowledge and experience. However, as a limitation, participation generally included a similar cohort of students in all 3 series. Moreover, the survey did not include generational status or information in the U.S. that would have helped tease out the responses for identity.

In terms of organization, we found it helpful to leave ample time for questions and organic discussion within each session. The space must be established as one of trust and mutual respect for these conversations to flourish. The Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) SIG has, among other accomplishments, created a much-needed safe

space led by Hispanic/Latino/x students for Hispanic/Latino/x students. LMSA and Medical Spanish SIGs decided to create and promote this series of events as a partnership. As leaders of these organizations, student leaders saw the need to bring the Hispanic/Latino/x voice into the conversation that is taking place at a national level about racism. The ultimate purpose was to educate ourselves and those around us about the richness of the Hispanic/Latino/x community so that we are better suited to address them as future physicians. In addition, community-specific and targeted sessions can uniquely prepare healthcare providers to deliver culturally humbled, safe, and competent care.<sup>10</sup> Partnering also allowed students from the Hispanic/Latino/x community to reach students outside of that community to strengthen understanding, upstander interventions, allyship, and ultimately advocacy.

This series of conversations lead to further unanswered questions. For the near future, we want to continue events to highlight the amazing work being done by Hispanic/Latino/x medical students and faculty, providing pathways for the continual involvement of Hispanic/Latino/x students in education and research, and highlighting ways to advocate and properly care for Hispanic/Latino/x patients. The goal is to consolidate the information and conversation created in these sessions into a course that could be integrated into the medical school curricula, possibly through the Transitions course that is mandatory for students to take in between each phase of medical school. This would maximize the reach of the message of inclusivity that we hope to convey. This method would also allow us to obtain more survey responses from students to determine what are the gaps in knowledge that need to be further discussed.

This paper provides a foundation for other schools to build on what we have created and implement broadly. We hope that our students and faculty take the lessons learned from these and future conversions and apply them to the care of our future patients. We also seek to inspire other Hispanic/Latino/x individuals to aspire to become physicians, educators, researchers in academic medicine, and to elevate their identity as Hispanic/Latino/x as they climb their way to success.

### **Acknowledgments**

We want to acknowledge the rich diversity within the construct of Hispanic/Latino/x and celebrate those who navigate academia today.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A. Glosario de Términos Asociados con Racismo

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