

We are Called

TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.



Team Reflection - Huddle

No 19 – Hispanic Health Disparities

Over the past decade, Hispanics accounted for more than half of the U.S. population growth, and they are among the youngest racial/ethnic groups in the country with a median age of 30. This large, diverse population comprises Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South American, Central American or other Spanish cultures of origin regardless of race. By 2060 the percentage of Hispanic children in the U.S. under the age of 18 will nearly equal that of white (non-Hispanic) children, 32% and 36% respectively. [19.1]

Health disparity data in Hispanic populations reveal paradoxes. When compared to whites, Hispanics fare better in some health categories, while faring much worse in others. While COVID-19 may have serious implications for whether this remains true [19.2], life expectancy for Hispanics exceeds that of whites by nearly two years, reflecting what appears to be distinct resiliency. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, a Hispanic professor of theology and ethics who passed away in 2012, writes,

“One of my earliest insights, which becomes deeper and clearer with the passing of time, has to do with Hispanic women’s ability to deal with suffering without being determined by it. It is an indication that we are unwilling to allow ourselves to be defined by others or by the circumstances over which we have no control.”

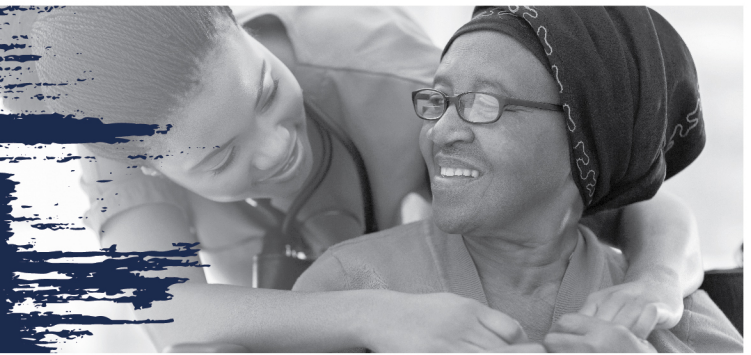
She continues by explaining that it is *la lucha*, the fight, that is central to Hispanic women’s self-understanding, and highlights the role of *fiestas*, celebrations and as a means of fighting against experiences of deep pain. While *fiestas* could never erase their suffering, they signify the importance of “struggling against” *in spite of* their pain. If professor Isasi-Díaz were alive today, she would be grappling herself with the injustices in society and health, as this was an extension of her own spirituality. As she explains, “Drawing closer to God and struggling for injustice have become for me one and the same thing.” [19.3]

Consider

How does your care facility build connections with the Hispanic community in your geography, and what resources are available to provide culturally appropriate care and outreach?

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Let us pray together,

*[...] When slander and persecution were at their worst:
to unite myself intimately with Christ, my friend,
and to feel a comfort
that all the joys of the earth do not give –
the joy of feeling oneself close to God,
even when humans do not understand one.
It is the deepest joy the heart can have.*

- Excerpt from St. Óscar Romero, May 20, 1970. *The Violence of Love*

[19.1] <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1144.pdf>; and <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/>

[19.2] See CDC's Provisional Mortality Data for 2020, released March 31, 2021; <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7014e1.htm>; See Also, <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=64>

[19.3] Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-first Century*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 1996, 12 –131; 33.