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EDITORIAL

Advancing Equity in Education, Nutrition, and Community Health in Hispanic and Latino Populations

Nora Esteban-Cruciani, MD, MS, FAAP, JNHMA Editorial Board

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This issue brings together scholarship and community perspectives that highlight persistent inequities and provides emerging strategies to advance Hispanic and Latino health in the United States. Across the "Original Contributions" and "Voices" sections, the featured works underscore that achieving health equity requires transformation across medical education, clinical care, nutrition policy, language access, mental health, and community engagement.

Henderson and colleagues examine the implications of the 2023 Supreme Court decision in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard/UNC* for medical education through the work of the AMA ChangeMedEd RoundTable. Their work reinforces the connection between educational opportunity, workforce diversity, and equitable health outcomes. Santiago-Beniquez further explores representation in residency programs, underscoring the need to strengthen diversity across specialty training and postgraduate education.

Nutrition and chronic disease prevention remain central themes. Hispanic and Latino communities continue to experience disproportionate burdens of obesity, diabetes, and food insecurity driven by structural inequities. Comerford highlights dairy foods as affordable, nutrient-dense sources of calcium, vitamin D, and potassium, noting persistent gaps in intake among our populations. Cohen's qualitative study of Hispanic households participating in a Food is Medicine program emphasizes the importance of culturally grounded meal-planning and weight-loss interventions, while Sherer examines barriers to nutrition education among Hispanic adults with type 2 diabetes. Together, these studies demonstrate that improving nutritional health requires more than information alone; it demands affordability, language access, trust, health literacy, and culturally responsive care.

From a clinical perspective, these disparities are not abstract. As a pediatrician caring for migrant and inner-city populations, I see daily how nutritional inequities shape the health trajectories of children and families. From pregnancy through adolescence, inadequate nutrition, obesity, and other eating disorders contribute to preventable chronic disease, developmental

risk, increased hospitalizations, and premature mortality. These outcomes reflect systems that have yet to align evidence-based nutrition with equitable access and culturally responsive care.

Community-based healing practices are explored in Delgado's study of botanicas in South Texas during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the role of traditional healing spaces as trusted community institutions. The "Voices" section extends these themes through reflections on language, migration, and mental health. Ruiz calls for health systems to move beyond basic translation to Spanish toward meaningful communication and informed consent for Indigenous-language-speaking patients. Gomez examines depression and suicide among immigrant Latino men, emphasizing the intersecting burdens of social isolation, economic strain, trauma, and limited access to care. Flores' *Unsettled: Migrant Health in the U.S.* podcast series further amplifies lived experiences often absent from traditional academic discourse.

Collectively, the contributions in this issue reflect a shared commitment to advancing equity, representation, culturally responsive care, and community health. They remind us that health equity is not achieved through isolated interventions, but through sustained progress across education, policy, research, clinical care, and community partnership.

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