

Understanding Latinx Practitioners' Paths to Occupational Therapy

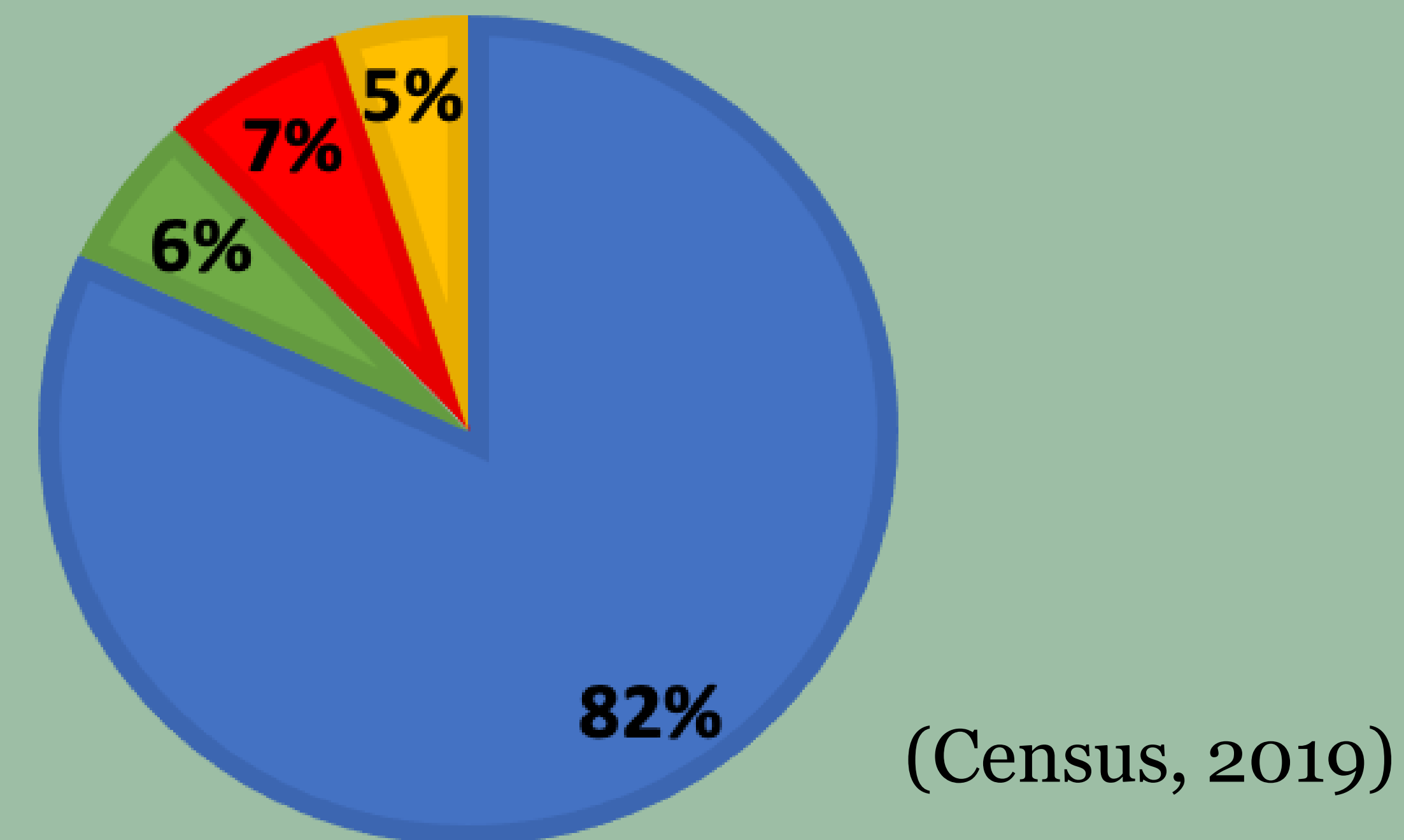
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Introduction

Race and Ethnicity % in the OT field

White Black Asian Hispanic

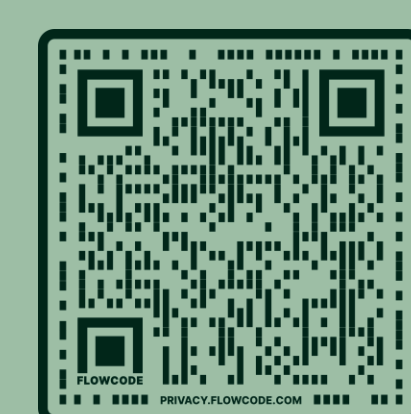


- Latinx patients who are seen by healthcare providers of non-Latinx ethnicity creates the potential for cultural misunderstandings and conflict when behaviors are misinterpreted (Florindez et al., 2020)
- Lack of exposure to OT affects career pathway through college years (Colaianni et al., 2022)
- Gaps exist in the current literature about what exposure and entrance into OT schools and the OT profession looks like specifically for Latinx individuals

Purpose

To explore the experiences of Latinx OTs as they came to learn about, choose, and pursue a career in OT

References



Methods

- **Design:** Qualitative descriptive study with semi-structured interviews
- **Participants:** 13 total participants
 - 2 identified as male, 11 identified as female
 - Age range: 26-50 years
- Some terms participants self-identified as: Hispanic, Latino/a/e/x
- Thematic coding & analysis

Themes

Experiences & Exposures

"OT just kind of showed up in my life... this was it!"

Self-advocacy

"No matter the cost."

Support

"She [minority faculty] provided a safe space."

Representation

"My identity does not fit into a box."

"The single digit [Latinx] percentages it's like, oh, this is a bigger issue than I thought."

Discussion

Timing of Exposure

- Lack of early exposure to OT added stress involved with applying to OT programs (Collins & Carr, 2018)

Taking Initiative

- Independently accessing information about OT field and programs

Encouraging Relationships & Opportunities

- Applying to and attending a program was often influenced by familial and peer support, as well as financial aid, program culture, and faculty advisors (Lucas, 2017)

Navigating Representation

- Being and seeing Latinx individuals in programs and OT field

Recommendations

OT programs can make the field more accessible to Latinx students by:

- Reaching out to Latinx students early in their career search
- Making curriculum changes that support diverse students
- Providing clear application requirements and financial aid
- Diversifying OT faculty
- Increasing mentorship