

# Department of Health Sciences and Social Work

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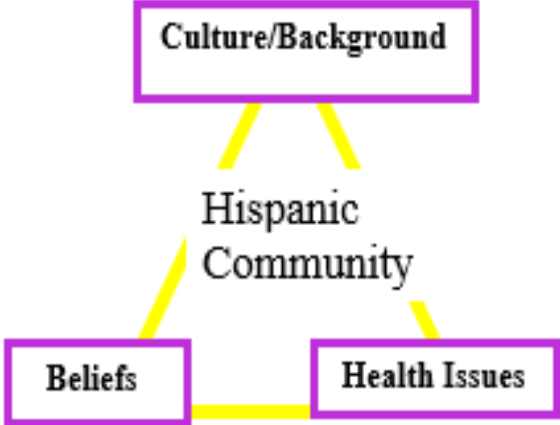
*“The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.”*  
-Ann Wigmore

# “Understanding the Hispanic Community’s Health Issues.”

By Argelia Reza, Kenia Reza, and Dalia Reza

### Abstract

Western Illinois University students in the Public Health Graduate Program seek to inform you about the major health issues that have and continue to affect the Hispanic Community's wellbeing. Many contributing factors have led or contributed to the health issues that are affecting the Hispanic Community, such as cancer, heart disease, unintentional injuries, strokes, diabetes, chronic liver disease, and many more. Some of the contributing health issues linked to the Hispanic Community are factors such as cultural background and health beliefs. There are many organizations and programs that are available to the Hispanic community, trying to reduce the health issues that are affecting this community.



## **Hispanics**

Many people may not know the difference between the terms Hispanic and Latino. To be considered a Hispanic, one main characteristic would be that the person must descend from a Spanish-speaking country. When we mention the Hispanic population, it focuses more on the language a person speaks,

Spanish. While the Latino population is based more on geography and not the language. Latinos are characterized more for coming from a Latin American country of descent. For example, a person that is from Brazil would be considered a Latino because the country is located in Latin America but is not considered Hispanic because their main language is Portuguese and not Spanish.



## **Beliefs**

The Hispanic community has many health beliefs that could be one of the causes for late diagnosis on certain health issues. Whenever the Hispanic population is not feeling well, they tend to take different measures before going to the doctor to get a checkup. Some Hispanics self-diagnose themselves since some have certain health beliefs that could be the cause of one of the illnesses they are currently going through. One of the beliefs is going to a folk healer also known as a curandero who prescribes them different remedies depending on the symptoms that the person is showing. Some Hispanics take this route because it is less expensive than a doctor visit. Due to some believing that the folk healer has cured them, it might cause the sick person to get worse since getting treatment is being prolonged and could lead to their death.

## **Health Issues**

The Hispanic Community faces many health issues, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and many more. One of the leading causes within the Hispanic Community is cancer. Just in the year 2015, it was reported 125,900 were diagnosed with cancer. Adults in the Hispanic community are also more likely to be considered obese, which leads them to have a higher chance of being diagnosed with a variety of diseases mentioned. Due to the high obesity rate, cardiovascular disease is one of the leading health issues in the Hispanic population. Some of these illnesses could have been treated earlier or could have been prevented if a few changes were made in their daily lives.



## **Programs/Organizations**

Some of the programs or organizations that have been helping the Hispanic community are LULAC, National Alliance for Hispanic Health, and AMIGAS. The three programs'/organizations' main objective is to educate, increase public awareness, conduct health research, and reduce health issues that have been affecting the community for many years. The organization LULAC mainly focuses on conducting research to be able to distribute the information and provide programs that certain regions are deficient in. The organization National Alliance for Hispanic Health provides programs that help combat vision health problems such as glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, and other types of eye problems. The program AMIGAS has been focusing on promoting cervical cancer screening for women between the ages of 21 and 65. This program is helping reduce one of the leading health issues in the Hispanic community, which is cancer.

## Summary

Hispanics and Latinos are groups that depending on the place and language that is spoken, many only identified as being just one or both. Hispanics identify more with language compared to Latinos that tend to identify more with the location of their birthplace. There are many major health issues that involve the Hispanic population. The majority of the health issues in the Hispanic population are due to contributing factors such as lifestyle, economic status, and health beliefs which many times play a big role in how successful they are in detecting the illness on time for treatment. Many programs have been implemented. Some of the programs or organizations that are currently helping the Hispanic community are LUCAC National Alliance for Hispanic Health and AMIGAS

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## OMH Announces Theme for National Minority Health Month 2021

**#Vaccine Ready | April 2021**

**Nidhiswi Yeruva**

April is National Minority Health Month, and this year, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Minority Health (OMH), is focusing on the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic



is having on racial and ethnic minority and American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The goal is to underscore the need for these vulnerable communities to get vaccinated as more vaccines become available. COVID-19 vaccination is an important tool to help us get back to normal and prevent the spread of COVID-19 so we can bring this pandemic to an end.

This year's theme for National Minority Health Month is **#Vaccine Ready**. The focus will be to empower communities to:

- Get the facts about COVID-19 vaccines.
- Share accurate vaccine information.
- Participate in clinical trials.
- Get vaccinated when the time comes.
- Practice COVID-19 safety measures.

As more vaccines become available, there are steps communities can take to protect themselves until they can get vaccinated. Be sure to:



- Wear a mask to protect yourself and others and stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from others who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds. The more people you are in contact with, the more likely you are to be exposed to COVID-19.

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## **National Alcohol Awareness Month**

**By Sai Ram Shabad**

The month of April is National Alcohol Awareness Month in America, providing an opportunity to increase awareness of alcohol addiction in an intense 30-day focus. The aim is to understand alcohol's causes, the effective treatments available, plus encouraging people's recovery if possible.



Along with the month-long awareness campaign is an "Alcohol-Free Weekend," held annually. In 2021 this event happened April 5-7 and encourages individuals and families to remain free of use for 72 hours while seeking help if desired.

### **How to Observe**

Be sure to use the hashtag #AlcoholAwarenessMonth on social media while sharing and increasing awareness. Plus, you might encourage loved ones you know to:

- Practice limiting their consumption by keeping track of quantity consumed.
- Encourage parents to discuss alcohol abuse with children and talk to your children too.
- Healthcare workers can make a concerted effort during the month of April to talk about options with their patients.

### **History**

Alcohol Awareness Month was established in 1987 by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. The idea was then and is now to help communities reach out to the public and provide answers to end the stigma associated with alcohol abuse.

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## Occupational Therapy Month – April

By Queen Esekhalu

Occupational Therapy Month was established in 1980. It is held in April to correspond with the American Occupational Therapy Association's Annual Conference and Expo. During April, Occupational Therapy Month recognizes all the benefits this specialized healthcare provides. When injury strikes or long-term wear of joints and muscles require

rehabilitation, an occupational therapist (also known as OTs) provides the necessary exercises to get us back into our daily routines. Simply getting out of bed may be a challenge, or moving from one position to another becomes a problem we need to overcome. OTs have studied the movements required to make these transitions happen safely and to retrain our newly repaired body parts to do the job. They know the therapies to help improve weakened muscles and alternatives when others fail us.

### What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational therapy is the only profession that assists people of all ages in doing what they want and needs to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations).

Occupational therapy practitioners help people of all ages live their lives to the fullest by promoting health and preventing—or living better with—injury, illness, or disability. Common occupational therapy interventions include assisting children with disabilities in fully participating in school and social situations, assisting people recovering from injury in regaining



skills, and assisting older adults experiencing physical and cognitive changes. Typical

occupational therapy services include:

- An individualized evaluation in which the client/family and occupational therapist determine the person's goals.
- Customized intervention to improve the person's ability to perform daily activities and reach the goals.
- Outcome evaluation to ensure that the goals are met and/or changes to the intervention plan are made.

Occupational therapy practitioners take a holistic approach in which the focus is on adapting the environment and/or task to fit the person, and the person is an integral part of the therapy team. It is a science-based evidence-based practice.

### **How To Observe #OTMonth or #OccupationalTherapyMonth**

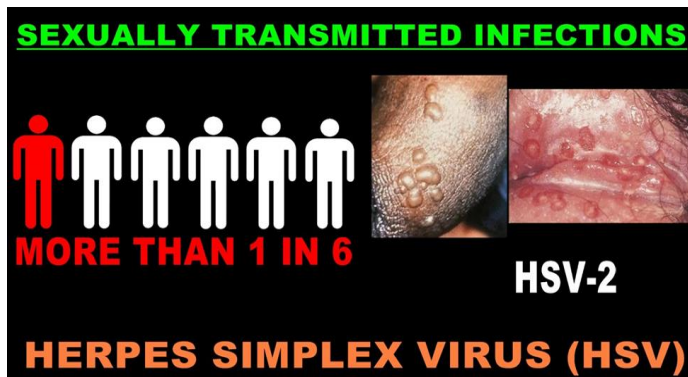
Throughout the month, recognize an occupational therapist you know. If you are interested in becoming an occupational therapist, explore your educational path. Use #OTMonth or #OccupationalTherapyMonth to share on social media.

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## Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Awareness Month.

By Tolulope Ajayi



According to WHO, an estimated 340 million curable sexually transmitted infections (STIs) occur each year, and STIs are responsible for considerable ill-health. New CDC reports show that 1 in every 5 people in the United States had a sexually transmitted infection (STI) on any given day in 2018. (CDC, 2021). Sadly, STIs remain common and costly to the nation's health, such that about 26 million STIs were acquired in 2018, and direct lifetime medical costs of new STIs in 2018 totaled nearly 16 billion dollars (CDC, 2021). Three common STDs have increased sharply across the United States for the fourth year in a row. Take a look below.

- i. Gonorrhea increased 5% to more than 580,000 cases – the highest number reported since 1991.
- ii. Chlamydia increased 3 percent to more than 1.7 million cases – the most ever reported to CDC.
- iii. The number of primary and secondary syphilis cases – the most infectious stages of syphilis – increased 14 percent to more than 35,000 cases, the highest number reported since 1991

The month of April has been set aside as the Sexually Transmitted Infection Awareness Month with the aim of reversing the trend of growing numbers of STI cases. The Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA) Foundation is calling on individuals and healthcare providers to take

these three actions to protect themselves, their partners, and their patients from STDs: Talk, Test, and Treat.

### **What are Sexually Transmitted Infections?**

STIs are diseases that are transferred from one person to the next through sexual intercourse.

They include syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital herpes, human papillomavirus (HPV), HIV, among others. Many of these STIs go undetected. They can be toxic and spread during sex even without symptoms.

### **How are STIs spread?**

If you have vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has an STI, you can contract it. An STI may affect someone who engages in sexual activity. To get an STI, you don't even have to go all the way to have anal or vaginal sex. This is due to the fact that certain STIs, such as herpes and HPV, are transmitted by skin-to-skin contact.

### **What can I do to protect myself?**

- The surest way to protect yourself against STIs is not to have sex - Abstinence
- If you do decide to have sex, you and your partner must get tested for STIs beforehand.
- Make sure that you and your partner use a condom from start to finish every time you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex. Know where to get condoms and how to use them correctly.
- Practice mutual monogamy, which means that you and your partner both agree only to have sexual contact with each other.
- Avoid mixing alcohol and/or recreational drugs with sex because, with these, you are more likely to take risks, like not using a condom or having sex with someone you normally wouldn't have sex with.

## **Where can I get tested?**

There are places that offer teen-friendly, confidential, and free STD tests. Visit

<https://gettested.cdc.gov/> to find an STD testing location near you.

## **Are STIs Treatable?**

Some STIs, like chlamydia and gonorrhea, can be cured with medications prescribed by your doctor. Other STIs, like herpes, HIV, can't be cured, but you can take medicine to help with the symptoms. If left untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause female infertility. STIs can increase your chances of getting HIV, and some STDs, like HIV, can be fatal if left untreated.

## **Link and contact for more information:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/default.htm>

Helpline: 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348

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## Stress Awareness Month 2021

By Oluwatomilola Glory

Stress can be crippling, and it can lead to or exacerbate health issues. And, because stress is an unavoidable part of life, no one is immune to it. It is important to equip ourselves with information so that we can identify it when it arises. Amazingly, we do not always know we are experiencing stress. Every April is Stress Awareness Month.



Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. In short bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline. But when stress lasts for a long time, it may harm your health. Stress is a normal feeling. There are two main types of stress:

- **Acute stress.** This is short-term stress that goes away quickly. You feel it when you slam on the brakes, have a fight with your partner, or ski down a steep slope. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another.
- **Chronic stress.** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. You may have chronic stress if you have money problems, an unhappy marriage, or trouble at work. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. You can become so used to chronic stress that you don't realize it is a problem. If you don't find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems.

## **How To Observe Stress Awareness Month**

1. Practice meditation: One of the most effective ways to deal with stress is to learn how to silence the mind. Meditation is one of the most popular methods of achieving this quiet.
2. Exercise: Another way to battle the debilitating effects of stress is to exercise. Whether you are a jogger, bicyclist, or just like to take long walks, be sure to get some fresh air and exercise into your daily routine.
3. Visit your doctor: They are really in the best position to get you started on the path to a stress-free lifestyle. Make an appointment today.

## **Why Stress Awareness Month Is Important**

1. It reminds us to pay attention to our health: According to the official website, "Stress Awareness Month is a national, cooperative effort to inform people about the dangers of stress, successful coping strategies, and harmful misconceptions about stress that are prevalent in our society."
2. It is going strong: Stress Awareness Month has been an ongoing campaign of awareness and education since 1992.
3. Because we are all feeling it: A recent survey found that about two-thirds of U.S. workers report engaging in behaviour such as drinking or crying regularly to deal with stress.

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## Departmental Information

### Graduate Programs

M.S. in Health Sciences

- Public Health
- School Health

Post Baccalaureate Certificate

- Health Services Administration



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### Undergraduate Programs

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- B.S. Health Services Management
- B.S.W. Bachelor of Social Work

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