

Removing Language Barriers: Our Experiences in an Intensive Summer Medical Spanish Program

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BACKGROUND

- Spanish is spoken by more than 559 million people globally
- The U.S. has the 2nd largest population of Spanish speakers in the world, with about 13% of the population speaking Spanish at home
- Currently, the number of physicians who speak Spanish in the U.S. is not reported

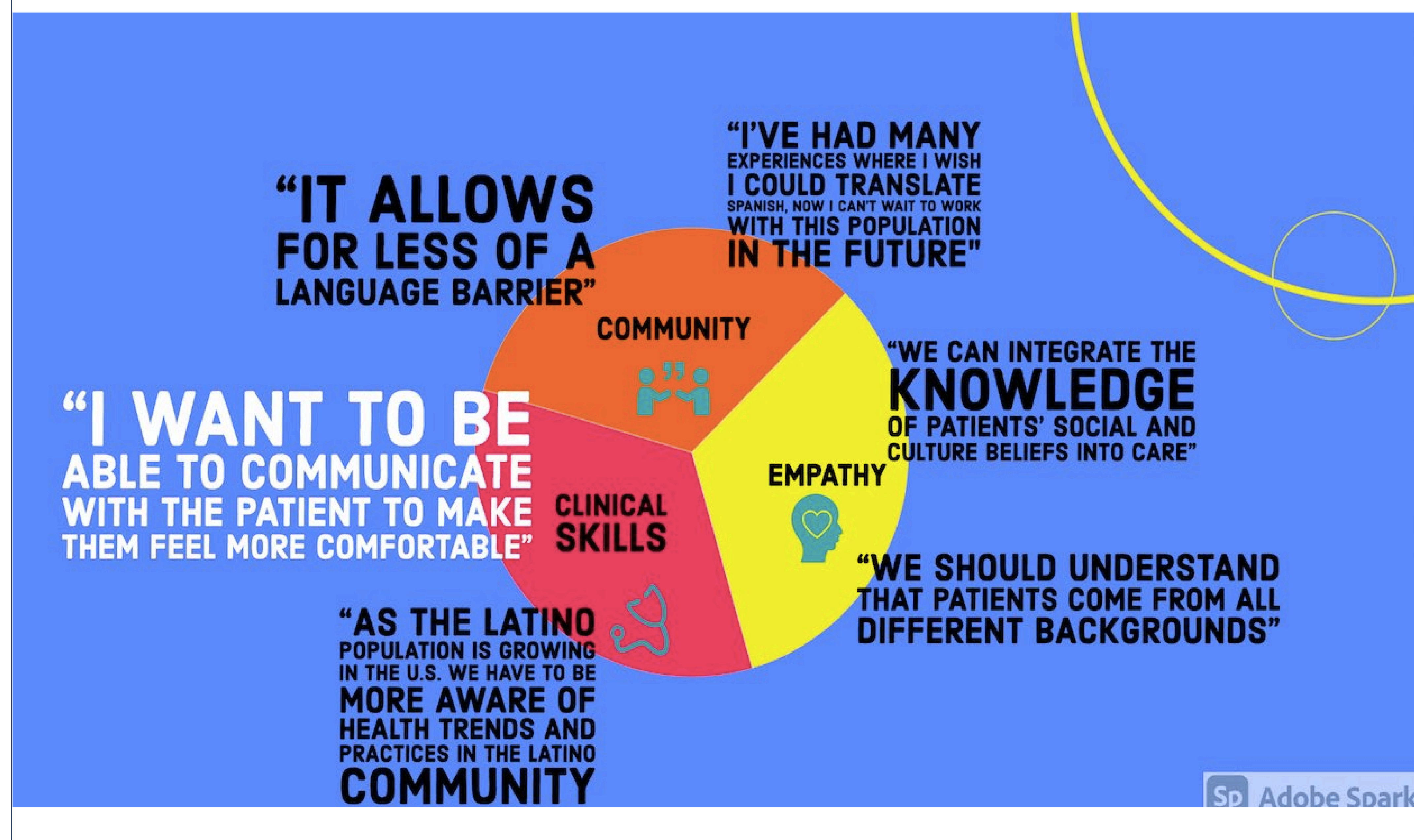
PURPOSE

Our purpose is to describe our experience of a virtual immersive medical Spanish program during our summer break following our first year of medical school.

METHODS

- We were awarded a Global Health Scholarship to participate in an intensive summer medical Spanish program at Pop Wuj Clinic in Xela, Guatemala
- We were paired with personal one on one Spanish tutors learning more about the Guatemalan culture in addition to standardized patient experience for 8 weeks.
- Our sessions varied from 90 minutes to two hours, averaging about 8-10 hours a week
- Due to COVID the program was a virtual format.

THEMES



BARRIERS

- **Virtual Learning:** We both felt like the best way to learn a new language is to visit the country and have hands-on experience with the community and volunteer in the clinic
- **Internet Connection:** There were times when our tutors had no internet connection due to electricity outages or floods, but we were always able to reschedule
- **Language Continuation:** Finding ways to keep up with learning Spanish while not practicing in clinic is a challenge

CONCLUSION

- We had many similarities during our summer intensive immersion program, and themes that we both experienced were empathy, a sense of community, and improving our clinical skills
- This experience has allowed for us to develop our language learning skills for our third year of medical school and beyond.
- We plan to participate in the Pop Wuj Clinic Program during our fourth year as an away rotation

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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