

## Background

- College enrollment increased among Hispanic students<sup>1</sup>
- Number of Latinx students pursuing and graduating with a STEM degree is lower than White students<sup>2</sup>
- Hispanics/Latinxs comprise 16% of the U.S. workforce, only 7% of the STEM workforce is composed of these individuals<sup>1</sup>
- Family's perspectives and beliefs affect the education and career path many youth pursue<sup>3</sup>
- Parental encouragement is a strong predictor of Latinx students' early educational aspirations<sup>4</sup>
- Some Latinx students do not feel supported by their families in regard to their STEM pursuit<sup>5</sup>

## Research Question

What is the role of family among Latinx youth pursuing higher education and careers in the sciences?

## Method

### Context and Participants

- 11 Latinx students (54% high school, 45% college), with an mean age of 18.
- Over half the sample identified as male (55%).

### Procedure

- One-on-one in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Latinx HS students from a science-support program.

### Interview Protocol

- Included questions on experiences being in a science-support program and perceived support and the general perception of their families and peers.

### Qualitative Analysis

- Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.
- Transcripts coded inductively, using a thematic analysis approach (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

## Results: What is the **positive** role of family in Latinx youth pursuing higher education and careers in the sciences?

### Strong Sense of Pride in the Student

"My parents' hope for me is **not to work in a factory** as the actual worker because they think it's a **heavy job that doesn't pay** that well that you're at high risk and you can get injured."

"I guess, when I talk about it, they see how passionate I am about science, or it **makes them be more supportive**, and they let me know that, '**Yeah, it's gonna be hard, but just not to give up. It'll be worth it.**'"

### Positive Perceptions about Studying Science

### High Educational Expectations from Family

"So that was **not an option, to have a minimum wage job** because they said, 'We coulda just stayed at Belize if you wanna just come here to have a minimum wage job. **We came for a better future**, not to keep the same.'"

## Results: What is the **negative** role of family in Latinx youth pursuing higher education and careers in the sciences?

### Traditional Gender Roles

"Instead of being there, you **have to figure things out for yourself**, and do things yourself. Rather than getting help from them or support."

"When you're a girl...you're not really even supposed to be in school. You finish school...you get married, have kids, and **the man is the one supposed to be providing** for you...There's **no reason for you to be in school**, when you're meant to be the one at home."

### Lack of Instrumental Supports

"My aunt had gotten into Northwestern—and then my grandma just flat out said, 'You're not going. You're not gonna go,' 'cuz **she didn't value it and it was expensive.**'"

### High Costs Associated with Attending College

## Conclusions

- Study highlights familial barriers and factors that promote and support Latinx students pursuing STEM.
- Results can have implication on interventions to better support Latinx students and their families, while considering potential barriers and promotive factors.
- Biased sample – Latinx students who were motivated and interested in the sciences given their participation in a science support program.
- Future studies should consider recruiting a broader sample of students from predominantly Latinx schools.

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## References

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