

## **Hispanic/Latinx Adults' Perceptions of Deservingness in Addressing Social Care**

**Background:** Historically, the “deserving poor” were thought to be unable to work through no fault of their own, while the “undeserving poor” were economically disadvantaged due to a lack of virtue. The rising costs of healthcare and disparities in insurance coverage coupled with limited public and private resources have ensured that narratives of deservingness continue to be salient for the Hispanic/Latinx community.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to understand Hispanic/Latinx individuals' perceptions of social care screening and referral processes to improve engagement, thereby reducing the accumulation of disadvantage.

**Methods:** We conducted 1) Three focus groups with Hispanic/Latinx adults (n=26) with no previous engagement with social care screening and, 2) Telephone interviews with Hispanic/Latinx adults (n=30) who reported unmet social care and desired community resources. All conversations were transcribed verbatim, translated from Spanish to English, imported into NVivo qualitative analysis software, and analyzed using Thorne's interpretive description.

**Results:** Hispanic/Latinx adults described deservingness as an actual and/or acute need for community resources, having a disability/being sick, and being offered services without requesting them. Characteristics of undeservingness included: taking advantage of the system, buying above one's means, wanting things for free, and laziness.

**Conclusion:** Understanding Hispanic/Latinx individuals' sense of who deserves resources can improve the cultural adaptation of social care screening and referral processes. Tailoring social care screening and referral processes to align with the narratives of deservingness embodied by Hispanic/Latinx adults may contribute to their engagement in these processes, which can ultimately advance health equity.