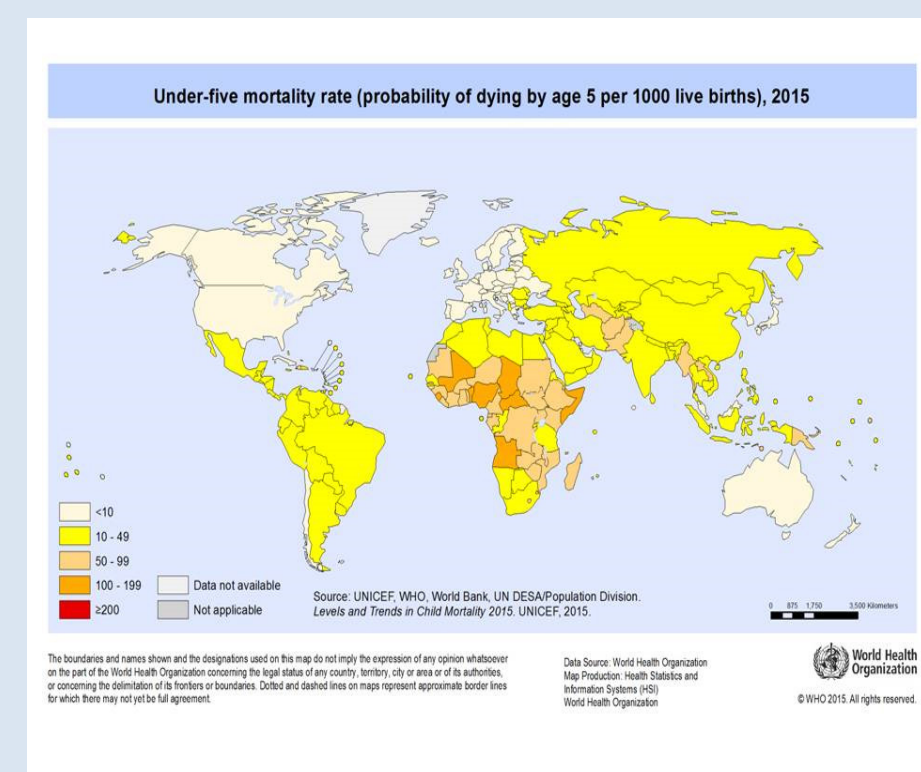# Infant Mortality Among the Latino Population in Worcester, MA
Population Health Clerkship

Kathryn Crawford, RN, Nichole Lang, Rachel Le, Camilla Yu, and Heather-Lyn Haley, PhD
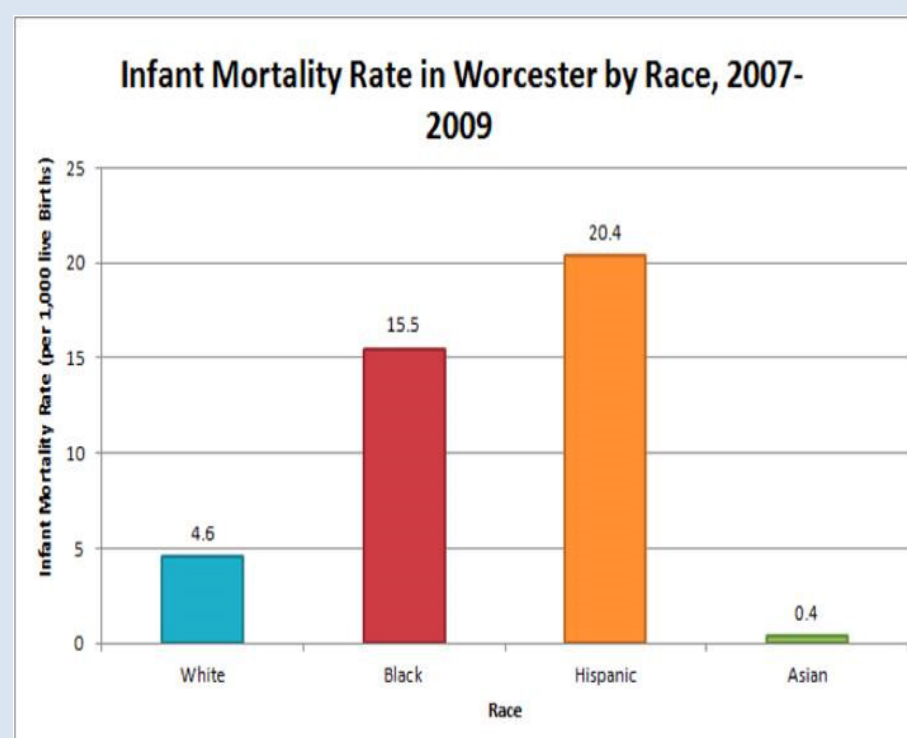
WHAT IS INFANT MORTALITY?

Infant Mortality is defined as the death of an infant, that is, a child less than 1 year of age. **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)** is the number of infant deaths per 1000 live births in a given geographical region. Infant Mortality can be furthermore subdivided into **Perinatal** (22 weeks gestation to 7 days postpartum), **Neonatal** (birth to 28 days postpartum), and **Post-Neonatal** (29 days to 1 year postpartum). About 2/3rds of infant deaths are neonatal. (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2015)

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Globally, the infant mortality rate is 32 deaths per 1000 live births (WHO, 2015). The infant mortality rate in the **United States** is approximately 6 deaths per 1000 live births. The United States ranks 180 out of 228 countries worldwide in infant mortality rates, lagging behind other wealthy nations (CDC, 2015).

While **Massachusetts** has a rate of 4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, the infant mortality rate in **Worcester** is 8 deaths per 1,000 live births. The Hispanic population had the highest infant mortality rate in Worcester between 2007 and 2009 when compared to black, white non-Hispanic, and Asian populations. (MDPH)

Infant Mortality Rate in Worcester by Race, 2007-2009

OUR PROJECT

The Worcester Healthy Baby Collaborative is a volunteer-based initiative to address social determinants of infant mortality in Worcester and Central Massachusetts. The project has already achieved marked gains in reducing infant mortality in the Worcester Ghanaian population and is now redirecting its efforts to address increasing trends in infant mortality in the Latino community. Our clerkship evaluated how initiatives to reduce Ghanaian infant mortality can be translated to achieve the same goal in the Latino community.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Latinos comprise 22.3% of Worcester's population and is the fasting growing demographic in Central MA.

- The Latino community is extremely diverse, with Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Salvadorans representing the largest subgroups within the Latino population.

- 20.8% of Latino students drop out of Worcester public schools, compared to 14.5% in the general student population.

-13% of Worcester residents speak Spanish only or Spanish as a first language.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- Cultivate awareness that Latino patients represent an extremely broad spectrum of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

- Be mindful of the unique needs, stressors, and challenges present among undocumented patients and how this might affect pre and postnatal care.

- Provide for the linguistic needs of all patients, keeping in mind that some Latino patients speak Spanish as a second language and are more comfortable discussing their care in an indigenous language.

- Discuss cultural practices related to childbirth, postnatal care, and maternal care in the early stages of pregnancy.

PROJECT GOALS: MOVING FORWARD

- Assemble focus groups with Latina women of childbearing age to identify socioeconomic and cultural barriers to accessing prenatal care.

- Create resources for providers to improve cultural competence related to the delivery of pre- and postnatal care in the Latino community.

- Collaborate with Latino community-based organizations to connect Latina patients with resources intended to promote healthy pregnancy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT