

Career Statement

I aim to advance equity and inclusion in science by becoming a tenured independent investigator at a research-intensive institution. My research involves understanding the language abilities and other life outcomes in Black and Hispanic/Latinx autistic young adults, with the broader objectives of advocating for language as a health outcome across the lifespan and developing language supports through community-based participatory research to reduce health disparities in individuals with communication needs. Additionally, I aim to advance equity and inclusion in communication sciences and disorders (CSD). In my doctoral studies, I developed programming with fellow BIPOC students to support minority students in CSD.

Research Statement

My objective is to advance equity and inclusion in communication sciences and disorders (CSD). To do this, my research entails: the evaluation of individuals with specific language impairment (SLI), the language abilities of minority autistic individuals, and increasing diversity in CSD.

As a T32 predoctoral trainee, I worked as a Graduate Research Assistant on a longitudinal pedigree study of SLI in a lab funded by NIH for over 25 years. Among my lab accomplishments, I built trust and rapport with minority families, such that many referred others to the study. I also collaborated to develop independent research projects to understand how speech- language pathologists and teachers evaluate children with SLI. Results showed children with SLI may face disparities in accessing services, despite practitioners recognizing their language-based needs. This project resulted in one co- authorship article in LSHSS and two resubmitted manuscripts (one first-author).

In parallel, I built an independent line of research on language in autism. I developed a community- based approach to engage Black and Hispanic/Latinx autistic young adults in research. This project resulted in one first- author article in AJSLP and informed my dissertation study, a longitudinal case study of language abilities in these participants. Findings showed retention was high, participants faced barriers in accessing supports, and assessment performance was consistent in terms of within- group rank. Two first- author manuscripts are in prep. As a T32 postdoctoral trainee, I aim to develop a participatory research model to reduce disparities in minorities accessing research as a resource, as well as linguistic probes to investigate language more comprehensively.

My third research area involves increasing diversity in CSD. I developed programming with fellow minority students to advance equity and inclusion in CSD. A first- author article on this work is in press at Perspectives. I also collaborated on two independent research projects examining linguistic injustice in academic writing and the evaluation of applicants to CSD programs using holistic review criteria. CSD faculty rated conference abstracts of equally strong scientific quality lower if written in L2- like versus L1- like English and the stereotypically successful student highest. These projects resulted in two co- authorship articles and one first- author resubmitted manuscript.

Overall, my research embodies the belief that language is a health outcome and a commitment to reducing health disparities for minorities with communication needs. Together with interprofessional education and practice activities, I strive to produce research that is impactful to both the individuals we serve in CSD and the field itself.

Symposium Statement

As a BIPOC immigrant and postdoctoral trainee working with Black and Hispanic/Latinx autistic young adults with language impairment (LI) and varying NVIQ, I aim to bring advocacy for their needs through community- based participatory research (CBPR). My research activities, intersectional approach to health disparities for individuals with communication disabilities (CD), and commitment to translating research into policy, make me an ideal candidate for the 2021 ASHA Research Mentoring- Pair Travel Award.

Racial/ethnic minorities may have intersecting identities tied to experiences of multiple marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989). For example, while white individuals with CD may experience poorer health and healthcare outcomes relative to individuals without CD, Black and Hispanic/Latinx individuals with CD may experience even worse

outcomes relative to white individuals with CD. In parallel, autistic minorities are underrepresented in research, with greater underrepresentation of those with LI and intellectual disability (LI+ID; Durkin et al., 2015). Thus, an intersectional approach, rather than treating marginalization as a binary outcome, may best help reduce health disparities.

This symposium will help me strengthen my research. Presentations on translating research into improved health and healthcare entail how to utilize research to improve the quality of care for autistic minorities with LI+ID. Further, presentations on parent training involve how to support autistic minorities with LI+ID in achieving person-centered outcomes. Additionally, presentations on reducing harm by addressing provider biases about individuals with CD and training medical students on how to serve patients with CD bear on how to create effective interprofessional education and practice and integrated service delivery models for autistic minorities with LI+ID across the lifespan.

Additionally, this symposium will help me maximize the public health impact of my work. Presentations on policy and funding align to my interest in how researchers translate research into advocacy and policies for individuals with CD. For example, the Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act is a necessary step in reducing health disparities for individuals with CD. I am interested in learning about pathways for effecting structural change, so that individuals (and especially minorities) with CD do not face systemic barriers in accessing positive health or healthcare outcomes.

Overall, this symposium directly aligns to my short- term and long- term goals of developing a CBPR model, while working toward developing language- based supports for autistic minorities. Attending this year's symposium as an RMPTA awardee will allow me to engage in

Mentor Statement

I am applying for a Research Mentoring- Pair Travel Award (RMPTA) with Dr. Audra Sterling, Associate Professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders, at the University of Wisconsin- Madison, as a mentor. We are both committed to reducing health and healthcare outcome disparities for the individuals with communication disabilities (CD) we serve in research. RMPTA will provide us with opportunities to explore this interest and further my progress toward my research career goals.

Dr. Sterling is an expert in language acquisition in and assessment of children with fragile X syndrome and other developmental disabilities. My research examines language development and assessment of Black and Hispanic/Latinx autistic young adults. Our research programs focus on language acquisition and communication in individuals with CD. Our complementary backgrounds will serve us well as a research mentoring- pair, especially in navigating networking opportunities and developing questions for speakers. In all, Dr. Sterling is a perfect mentor match for me.

Attending the Symposium with Dr. Sterling will help me reach my research career goal of becoming an independent investigator at a research- intensive institution who centers language as a health outcome to reduce health disparities. We share an interest in approaching the reduction of health disparities through interprofessional education and practice. Moreover, we are each interested in broadening the impact of our research through policy and systemic change. As an expert investigator with these mutual interests, Dr. Sterling will be able to guide me in how to position myself within a scholarly community as I develop programmatic research; this will be particularly beneficial for doing a mentored peer review.

Overall, Dr. Sterling and I are ideal candidates for RMPTA. Receiving this award will not only facilitate my research career goals, especially as I prepare an early career grant application through Pathways, but will also enable us to become stronger academic researchers.