

INCLUSION ON INSTAGRAM:

Using Social Media to Address Racial Disparities in Bone Marrow Registries

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Research Question

What effect does the use of stories from racially diverse patients and donors on bone marrow registry social media sites have on the rate of engagement of racial minority social media subscribers to these sites?

Abstract

The likelihood of racial minorities in finding a matching bone marrow donor is significantly lower than it is for Caucasians. Calculation of engagement rates, frequency of "likes" and growth data for 2021 was analyzed for the Instagram accounts: Be The Match, Gift of Life and DKMS (US) [2,3,4]. Posts about racial minorities as bone marrow recipients or donors are significantly underrepresented. With the increased popularity of social media, diversity in stories of bone marrow donors and recipients might increase the diversity of donors on bone marrow donor registries [6].

Methods

- Number of "Likes" and comments on Instagram for Be The Match, Gift of Life and DKMS (US) are analyzed for 2021.
- Social Blade website provides follower growth data [8].
- Number of followers, "likes" and comment data was applied to an Engagement Rate formula to assess active involvement of each post on the three registry Instagram sites [7].
- Racial minorities are defined as African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino or American Indian/Alaskan Native, in the description under each Instagram post [2,3,4].

$$\text{Engagement Rate (\%)} = \frac{(\text{Total Likes} + \text{Comments})}{(\text{Total Followers})} \times 100$$

Results

- Average overall engagement rates are DKMS (US) 54%, Be The Match 53%, Gift of Life 13%.
- Posts featuring racial minorities as patients or donors most frequent on Be The Match and DKMS (US) had higher engagement rates.
- Frequency of Instagram posts: Be The Match and Gift of Life is every 1-2 days, DKMS (US) every 3-4 days.

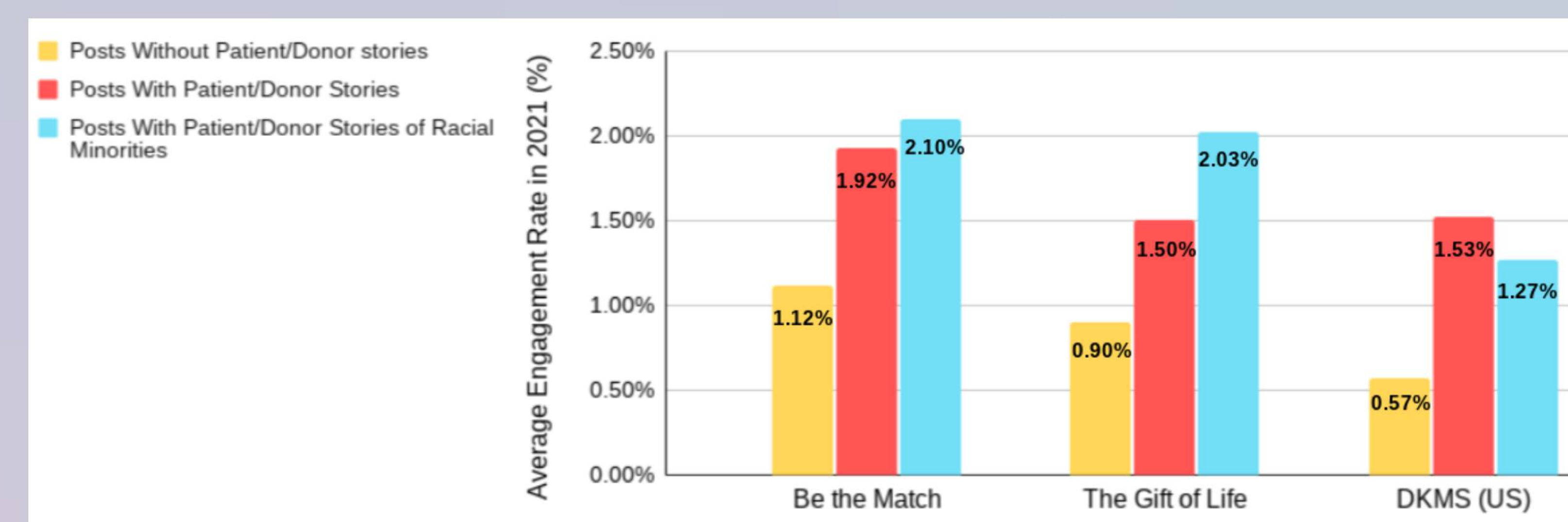


Figure 1. Distribution of Instagram posts content. Created by Anjana Persaud, Google spreadsheets.

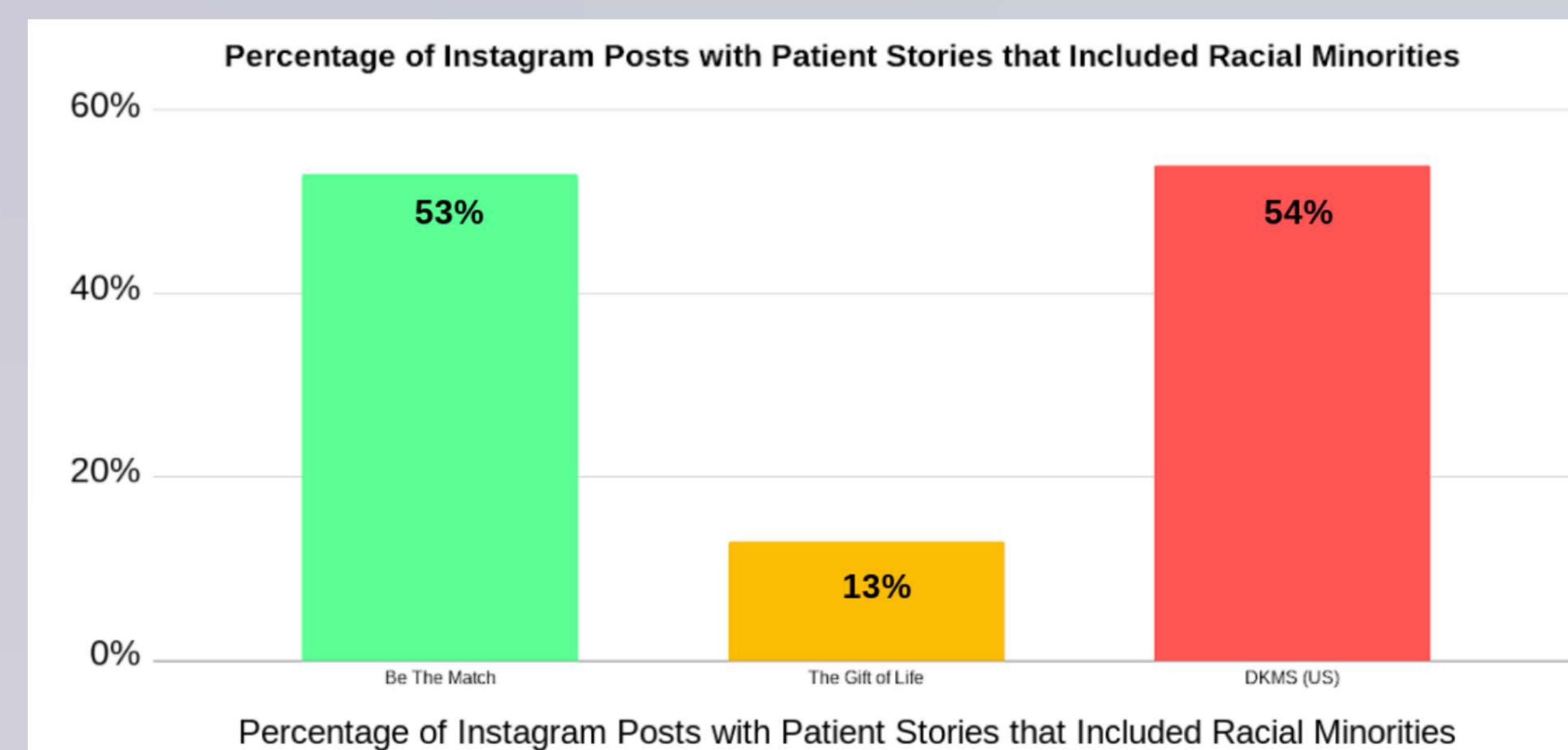
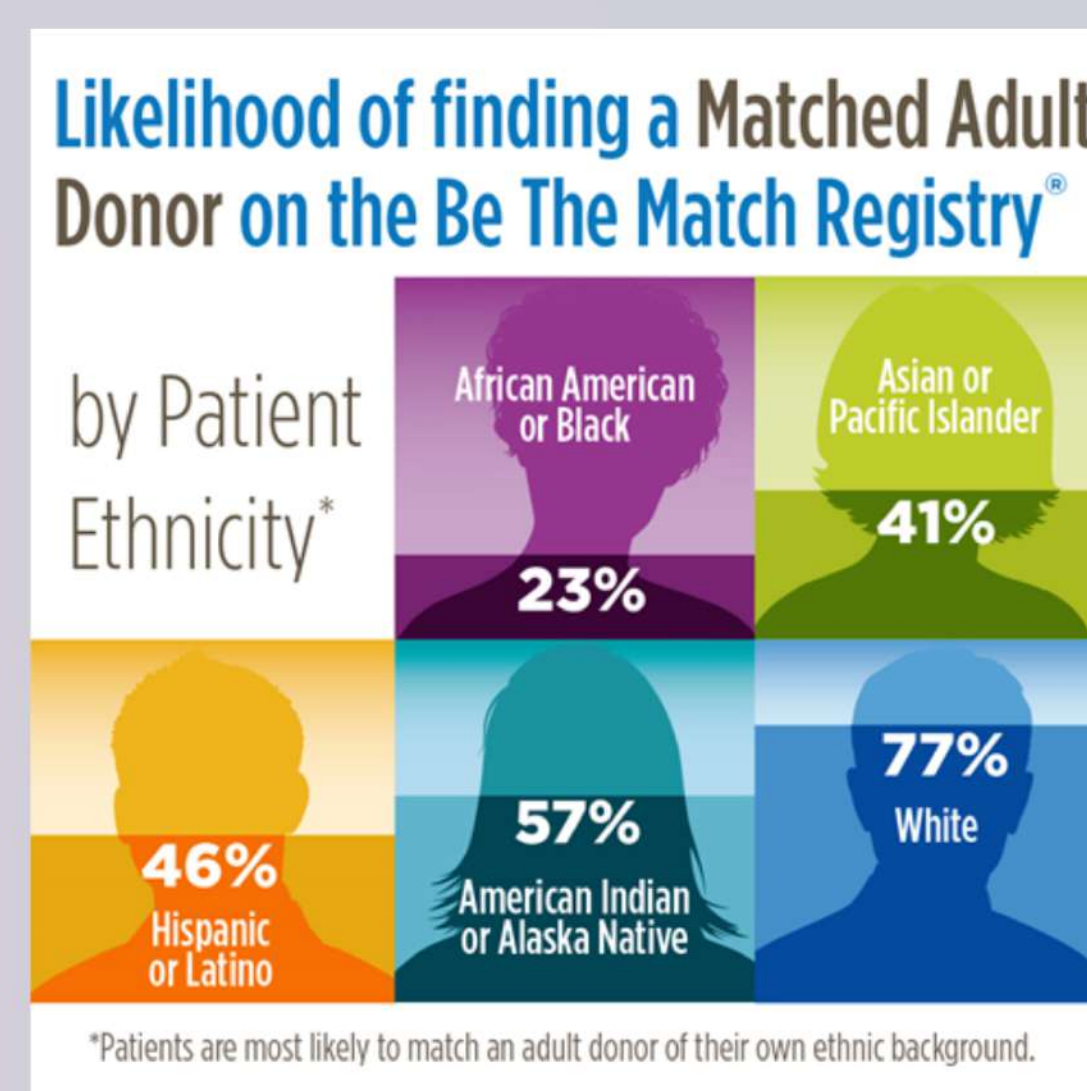
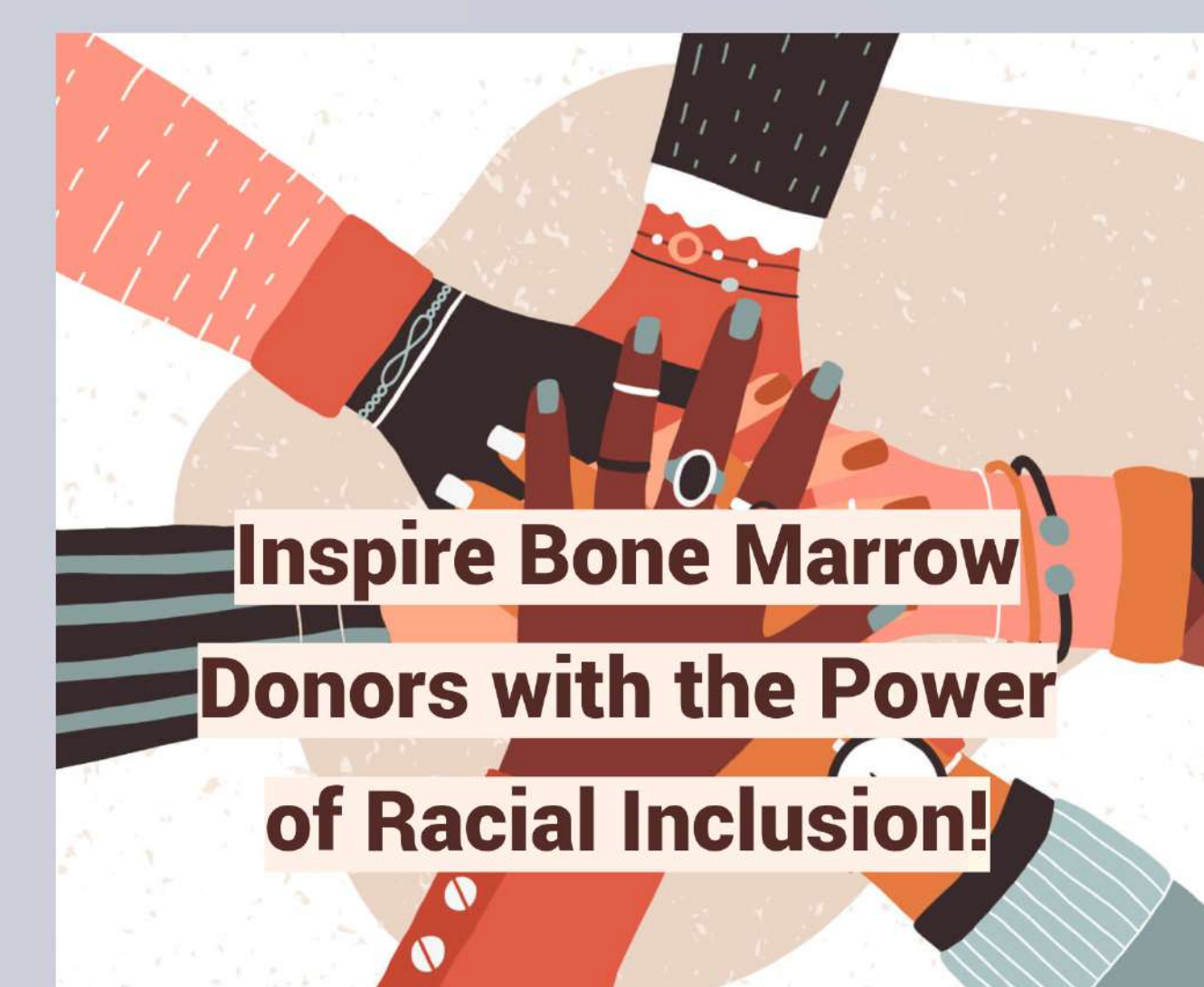


Figure 2. Percentage of Instagram Posts with Patient Stories that Included Racial Minorities. Created by Anjana Persaud, Google Spreadsheets



[1]



[5]

Conclusion

Current studies acknowledge the lack of diversity in bone marrow donor registries but do not address how to change this [6]. Disparities and misconceptions experienced by minorities in the healthcare system have resulted in distrust, which might be why fewer are on bone marrow registries as donors [6]. A higher audience engagement rate is noted on registries with a greater diversity of posts showing minorities as donors and recipients. Using the popularity of social media networks, such as Instagram, can increase awareness and promote advocacy to minority groups. I live in Queens, NY, a borough that is considered to be the most racially diverse urban area in the world [9]. The national problem addressed in this research project is a direct reflection of the racial disparity in finding a bone marrow match for residents in my hometown.

Acknowledgements

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