

may :: june 2023 :: RWMagazine.com

women

rochester

*making
space*

DANIELA GUERRERO VINSARD, MD

**MOTHER'S DAY
AROUND THE
WORLD**

**GROWING
CULTURAL
CONNECTIONS**

**LISA SCHUTZ
RESCUES AND
REDISTRIBUTES FOOD**

*the
culture
issue*



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Cover photos by Mansoul Brown

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2023-2024

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making space

Daniela Guerrero Vinsard, MD

By Gina Dewink

In a medical field where only 20% of providers are female, Daniela Guerrero Vinsard, MD, is paving a path. Currently a senior gastroenterologist fellow at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Dr. Guerrero is making a name in research, with her patients, within the specialty of GI and in Minnesota.

Why GI

Originally from Ecuador, Dr. Guerrero became passionate about gastrointestinal research early in her career. She states, "GI is a subspecialty of internal medicine that allows for procedural as well as clinical practice. It allows for hands-on practice, such as performing endoscopies. This is rewarding because we can see the results of our work quickly; we can do preventative scopes that may reveal precancerous polyps and then act on them, saving lives in some cases. That's what attracted me to such a competitive field." She also includes a healthy work-life balance as a reason the competition is high.

What women should know

As patients, there are some GI diseases and issues that face women more often than men (and vice versa). Dr. Guerrero explains, "Women tend to report more irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and autoimmune issues such as autoimmune hepatitis. In contrast, men tend to have

Photos by Kevaul Brown

more instances of esophageal cancer and Barrett's disease." There are preventative measures Dr. Guerrero wishes more people knew about. She says, "Emotions—stress, anxiety, depression—deeply affect gut health. The brain-gut connection is well established in the medical community, but much of the public is unaware of this important connection. Emotional processing and digestion are linked."

Changes in screening

A key passion Dr. Guerrero cites in her work is screening for colorectal cancer. Many have heard that screening begins at age 50, but in 2021 that age was changed to 45 in the U.S. Dr. Guerrero states, "It is important for me to spread the message—as of 2022, insurances are covering colorectal cancer screening earlier. Yes, colonoscopies are one way to screen, but there is also a stool-based test that is noninvasive. Someone at average risk at age 45 can have the stool screening and only have it checked again every one to three years. Or with a colonoscopy, a clean scan is good for 10 years. It is just important to be screened for early-onset colorectal cancer starting at age 45 in all asymptomatic individuals. I cannot stress this enough."

In the U.S., around 200,000 cases of colorectal cancer are treated per year. The rate of instances is rising in younger people. Research is ongoing into the potential causes of this rise. According to the Colorectal Cancer Alliance, colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer when detected early, yet they have found a third of at-risk adults have not been screened.

AI & tech in the GI field

Dr. Guerrero worked as a research fellow at Mayo Clinic in Florida and Showa University in Japan before declaring a major interest in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), colorectal cancer prevention and diagnosis and treatment innovations through technology and artificial intelligence applied to both IBD and colorectal disease. Dr. Guerrero explains, "Trying to develop and obtain training in how to leverage tech to deliver better results is of great interest to me. I am so pleased my journey brought me to Mayo Clinic in Rochester—it's like the Disney World for research!" She has been practicing and researching in Rochester for three years. "Medical training in the U.S. is so effective to educate high-quality physicians. The system

is so well done that there is no way someone will succeed unless they are dedicated—this is what attracted me to the U.S."

Adjusting to Minnesota

At the time of the interview, Dr. Guerrero was in Oslo, Norway, to obtain more training in her subspecialty. (She would like it noted it was warmer in Scandinavia than Rochester at the time.) Her education and career brought her from Ecuador to Miami, Florida, to Yokohama, Japan, to Farmington, Connecticut, to Rochester, Minnesota. "I'm glad I had Connecticut to prepare me for winter. That was the first time in my life I saw snow at age 27!" she says. "Being Latin American, the cold and darkness are hardest for me. My adjusting was less about the snow and more to the length of the dark winter here. The positive side is that I've come to value the changing seasons."

Love for Ecuador

Dr. Guerrero takes pride in her home country. Ecuador is a relatively small country with around 18 million people. She refers to it as a "rich country" in terms of multiculturalism within the different regions. "We are proud of the Galapagos Islands," she explains. "It is a treasure to us. It is where Charles Darwin researched evolution, you know? And the coast region, the highlands with the Andes Mountains and the Amazon—our regions are all a treasure. More than 32 ethnic groups have preserved traditions and languages in Ecuador."

Dr. Guerrero grew up in Quito, the capital, before beginning her world travels. She notes, "In Ecuador, first is family. When I moved to the U.S., I saw that children left the home at age 18. That never happens in Ecuador. Children stay with parents until they have established plans to move out,

maybe with a partner, or for other reasons, but there is no age limit to do this. Parents there would unlikely be okay with their children moving out so young, I think."

A second major difference she noticed involved food. "In Ecuador, we eat a lot of natural and whole foods—we are so lucky to have a lot of those," she explains. "Natural resources, fruits and vegetables are always available. Farmers provide them daily. It is fresh and delicious."

Toward the future

Dr. Guerrero sees focusing on preventative care as the most important aspect of health care. "We must be mindful of what we put into our bodies, what we eat and consume. Whole foods, fruits and vegetables, natural fiber will give you a far happier gut than consuming processed and canned foods," she says.

Though GI is a competitive field, Dr. Guerrero aims to empower future GI-women all over the world. "My advice to women looking to get into this subspecialty is first, to be sure you have passion and are ready for hard work. As it is male-dominated, women are still working twice as hard to obtain a position and a promotion. But if you work hard and smart and connect with great mentors who have the time and interest in providing guidance, it is well worth it." She also recommends attending conferences and meetings to collaborate with peers and network with other health care professionals.

"In general," she finishes, "I hope women will speak up and not be afraid to ask for opportunities. Don't hesitate to ask for what you want. Negotiate—for jobs, pay, everything. It is important to know your own worth." ::

DR. GUERRERO'S CULTURE CORNER

FOOD FROM ECUADOR: Tigrillo for breakfast
(mashed green plantains with melted cheese, eggs and onion)

POP CULTURE ICON: Beyoncé or Dua Lipa

BOOK: "Journey to the Heart" by Melody Beattie

PODCAST: "Coaching Real Leaders" by Muriel Wilkins

SPORT/HOBBY: CrossFit

IMPORTANT CAUSES: Ending colorectal cancer, finding a cure for inflammatory bowel disease and giving women access to education worldwide.

Culture ON TREND

By Gina Dewink

UPLIFTING ART

Rochester Art Center is featuring an exhibit—The Nexus of Well-Being and Art by Anne Labovitz—and it's just the cultural event to add to your calendar. With painting, sculpture, installation and a Well-Being Wall where visitors can create, the show runs now through July.



Y2K PREPPY

Noticed the mannequins in double popped-collar polo shirts at the mall or the chunky loafers at retailers? You're not imagining things. Preppy is back. Overall looks including trousers, pleated skirts, blazers and sweater vests are trending for spring. For new twists on old classics, visit Primp Boutique. To secure vintage Y2K, search Kismet and Refashion.



ANTI-PLASTIC

From UK's Plastic Packaging Tax to the UN talking treaties on plastic pollution, reducing plastic remains a cultural trend. Perhaps you've converted to no-packaging bar soap or bamboo Q-tips, but what about trash bags? BioBag Compostable Kitchen Bags started for composting but are now being used as everyday garbage bags to reduce household plastic. Find them at Natural Grocers and Menards.



GROUP GAMES

Searching for a break from screen time, board games (or tabletop games as Gen Z calls them) are trendy again. While the community at Board Game Geek predicts Frosthaven will be a top game, a simple, affordable, speedy card game tops the bestseller list: Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza. Get yours at Games By James.

DECADENT DESSERT

After a TikTok tangent, a decadent dessert is popular again. Target's Favorite Day creme brulee is simple, yet fancy. Looking to impress houseguests? They come in reusable terracotta ramekins! The warm, creamy custard with toasted sugar topping is also available at Fresh Thyme. Not looking to eat at home? Victoria's and The Redwood Room serve delicious options.



OPEN BELIEFS

If you feel there are fewer people at church and more people finding spirituality online, you are correct. With social media filled with manifestation, prayers and vibrations, many are exploring spirituality elsewhere. The upcoming Women & Spirituality Conference—around since 1981—is a safe space to investigate all beliefs, coming to Rochester September 23-24. ∴

