Watching this video and reading the articles made provided very good information and statistics on the health disparities that black women face during pregnancy (as well as in general). During this semester I’ve come to like OB and women’s health quite a bit, and in the past year I have learned a lot about racism (also perpetuated by the George Floyd case, the resurgence of the BLM movement and the hate against AAPI in 2020/2021). As a person of color, listening to the video as well as reading the articles help me put myself, my experience and my actions into perspective. I do really hope that I can work against the racism that I was raised to believe was correct and I do believe that through being a nursing student in the Cleveland community that I am able to take greater steps towards that goal.

The paper talking about interventions and things we can do to eliminate the disparities that are caused by the system made me think a lot about my current situation. Listening to the video (as well as the papers) made me primarily think about the university and the nursing program. Because I am currently a nursing student, I can assess things from the very beginning of the healthcare education system. The paper mentions needing to have a diverse workforce in order to provide comprehensive care for a large population, and that begins with having more diversity when admitting students into programs. I think that where I am, at Frances Payne Bolton, the diversity of students is a lot better than some other universities. However, the majority of nursing students are still white, and are still (biologically) female. And for a school located in Cleveland, a city with a very diverse population, with a high percentage of the black population, this strikes me as interesting. I understand that the school is associated with the Cleveland Clinic, and the Clinic isn’t as integrated or doesn’t serve the community as much as, say, MetroHealth or University Hospitals. However, I think that it is still important to have a much more diverse group of nursing students. It is extremely strange for us to go out into the community while representing Case Western Reserve University, but the community sees us and the group is predominantly white. It gives me slight ‘white savior’ vibes. I understand that that sounds a little harsh, but that’s what it feels like to me, myself included. I would also be uncomfortable if a group of predominantly white students came to my community to provide care. (This doesn’t mean that the care is unneeded or is disrespectful. Obviously receiving the care that people need takes utmost importance, but imagine if our nursing population was truly diverse. That would be amazing.)

And frankly, I find it a little unnerving that there are no Asian professors (not counting associate professors) at FPB, not to mention the low number of Black professors. Representation, even within professors, matters so much. It feels strange for us to go through diversity education and cultural competency courses when all of the professors that are teaching it are white.

This isn’t to say that *individuals* at FPB are racist or have discriminations but we all have to understand; no matter how much you educate yourself on racism or tear down implicit biases, it doesn’t replace actual diversity and representation. I am very sure that the professors at FPB try their very best to eliminate racism and biases, but it doesn’t really help that a lot of out POC (person of color) students experience microaggressions from clinical instructors or other staff, intentional or not. In my experience, a clinical instructor never really bothered to learn our names; we had 4 Asian girls in our clinical group. She blamed it on the masks, but she never struggled with the Caucasian girls in our group. It made me very uncomfortable, and I know the other girls were uncomfortable as well. I also know that a lot of the black students in our nursing cohort mentioned microaggressions (again, intentional or not) that they’ve experienced as a student during our sociology class last semester.

I am very grateful to have learned quite a bit about healthcare disparities and its effects on health in POC groups, specifically the Black population (due to its predominance in America as well as Cleveland). Awareness is extremely important and is the first step to change. As a nursing student I am able to advocate for the patient and do my best, but (as the paper mentions) it is important to eliminate the root cause of health disparities and to have a more diverse workforce in the healthcare system. No matter what I do, if the doctors and nurses for my patient are dismissing my patient and not providing my patient the care they need, the effects are still there. (This does not mean that I will not advocate or do what I can; I will.)