

A tricky inequality

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March 16, 2025

1 Problem

Let $a + b + c = 1$. Prove the inequality

$$\sqrt{4a+1} + \sqrt{4b+1} + \sqrt{4c+1} \leq \sqrt{21}. \quad (1)$$

2 Proof

I assume $a, b, c \in \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$. The assumption to stay on the positive real is justified below. We perform some preliminary algebra,

$$\begin{aligned} & \sqrt{4a+1} + \sqrt{4b+1} + \sqrt{4c+1} \leq \sqrt{21}, \quad (2) \\ & 4a + 4b + 4c + 3 + 2(\sqrt{(4a+1)(4b+1)} + \sqrt{(4a+1)(4c+1)} + \sqrt{(4c+1)(4b+1)}) \leq 21, \\ & 4 \underbrace{(a+b+c)}_1 + 3 + 2(\sqrt{(4a+1)(4b+1)} + \sqrt{(4a+1)(4c+1)} + \sqrt{(4c+1)(4b+1)}) \leq 21, \\ & \sqrt{(4a+1)(4b+1)} + \sqrt{(4a+1)(4c+1)} + \sqrt{(4c+1)(4b+1)} \leq 9. \end{aligned}$$