



12-2021

## African Americans with Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes in San Joaquin County: Barriers Associated to Biases and Stereotypes in Diabetes Care

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### Recommended Citation

Clark, Leacha and Jones, Alexis, "African Americans with Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes in San Joaquin County: Barriers Associated to Biases and Stereotypes in Diabetes Care" (2021). *MSW Capstone Conference*. 4.

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# African Americans with Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes in San Joaquin County: Barriers Associated to Biases and Stereotypes in Diabetes Care

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## Background

34.2 million Americans have Diabetes in the United States (CDC, 2020). That number continues to increase, rising every year to about 1.5 million new cases of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes according to the (American Diabetes Association, 2020). 4.9 million or 13% of African Americans have type 2 diabetes compared to 7.5 percent of non-Hispanic Whites. Like all patients, Black people require trust in collaboration with their primary care physicians. Due to historic and current trauma of racial discrimination, African Americans diagnosed with diabetes have a higher morbidity and mortality than their non-Hispanic White counterparts.

Due to ongoing discrimination, biases, and stereotypes within the healthcare field *African Americans are being disproportionately affected by Diabetes Mellitus*. The lack of evidenced based research on African Americans has created a gap in healthcare, which has caused a lack of recognition to the barriers and disparities that contribute to the healthcare Black people receive. Blacks with diabetes have endured this discrimination over the previous and present years. African Americans in Stockton, California have the highest prevalence rate for type 2 diabetes, particularly among the underserved communities and those over age 65.

Due to the social determinants of health many African American diabetics lack access to care along with appropriate treatment adherence. Most providers in San Joaquin County are non-Black providers which has created a barrier for Black diabetics. Due to systemic racism, that has created a lack of trust especially for those living in underserved areas. Many report feeling ignored by the healthcare professionals and treated unfairly.

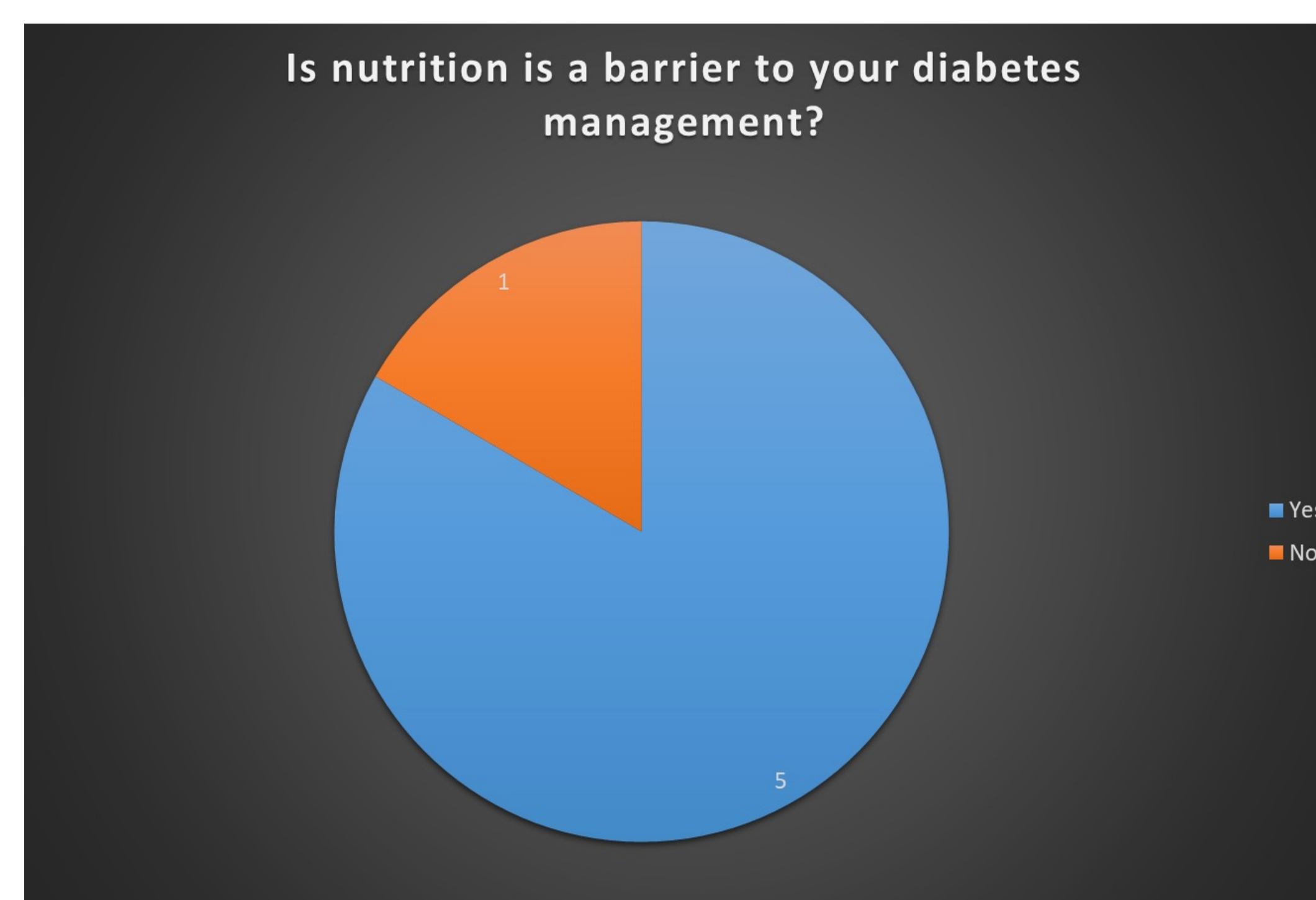
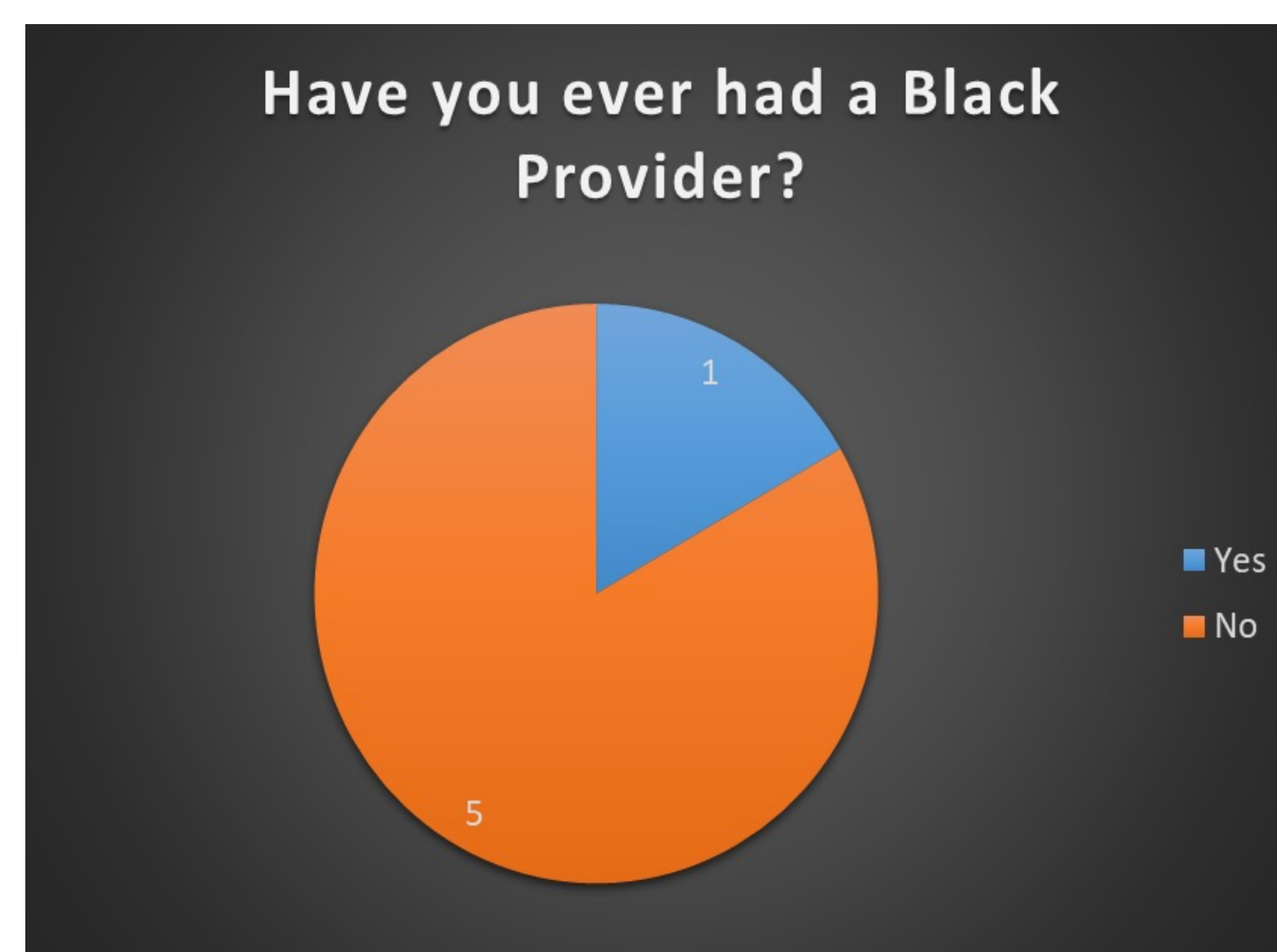
## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to The Abbott Foundation for providing grants to the University of the Pacific MSW Program

Research Advisor: Katie Savin, University of the Pacific, Assistant Clinical Professor

## Method

6 **Black** participants (3 men and 3 women) with diabetes living in Stockton, between ages 18-65 attended a two-hour focus group facilitated by investigators who are of African American descent. Investigators identifying as **Black** are also allowing the participants to feel comfortable, talking to two facilitators they can trust due to the past and present history of racism and healthcare stigmas within the Black culture. Participants were recruited via social media, Facebook and Instagram. Participants were also recruited through the distribution of flyers at Community Medical Centers, and various hospitals. Researchers utilized a focus group guide that consisted of 12 open ended questions and a survey. Participants were entered into a raffle for 25.00 gift card for their participation.



## Findings

THEME	QUOTE
Lack of culturally competent provider	<i>“A black provider would understand me more”</i> <i>” Another participant stated, “A Black provider would know more about the food that I eat and my life.”</i>
Perceived Bias	<i>“Because my doctor treats me differently, that's why I don't like going to the doctor, I don't trust them, all they do is run lab tests and want to fill my body with pills”</i>
Poor nutrition	<i>“The doctors don't tell me what to eat, they just run test and prescribe me medicine”</i> <i>“I learn what to eat from myself”</i>
Lack of access to care	<i>“The doctor only gives 15 minutes; he never offers any classes or extra support”</i> <i>“I do not have transportation to my appointments, and my doctor's office is not near me.”</i>



## Discussion

African Americans living in San Joaquin County rank number 1 for diabetes mellitus. Many African Americans living with diabetes are subjected to discrimination, stereotypes and biases within the healthcare field. Healthcare professionals are not adequately trained to treat patients that require cultural sensitivity to enable them to meet the optimal quality care of the patient. **Black patients with diabetes report due to the lack of trust, stereotypes, lack of access to care, lack of communication, and discrimination** they have encountered from their providers or healthcare professions it has a negative impact on the way they manage their diabetes. Participants in the focus group concluded that there are no **Black** doctors treating the **Black** population with diabetes in Stockton. Therefore, there is a need for more Black healthcare professionals in Stockton to decrease the diabetes epidemic in San Joaquin County. Barriers identified from the participants was consistent with findings researches identified. Transportation, communication, mistrust, discrimination, biases, and stereotypes were all identified as factors that have contributed to **Black** people in Stockton being subjected to Diabetes mellitus. Without proper trainings, to healthcare providers, support groups, transportation and increasing opportunities for more **Black** healthcare professional **Black** people with diabetes will continue to be negatively affected by diabetes.

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