

**AI
MED**

AIM

THE VOICE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MEDICINE

RIISING STAR

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**PLUS NEWS, REVIEWS,
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 **AIMed**
Artificial Intelligence
in Medicine

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a monoculture in
technology but
fortunately it's
slowly changing

At Acorn AI, Ana Oromendia

the life science industry. Oromendia and her team are building tools to create a rich representation of patients through multi-omics analytics and identify the ones who best respond to a particular drug therapy, and those who could be more likely to suffer severe side effects during a clinical trial.

Oromendia is confident about precision medicine going mainstream. However, working at a micro level of the pharmaceutical industry, she often witnesses silos. "I think creating more synergies between technology providers, drug companies, and healthcare systems will help everybody move forward faster. Meanwhile, a lot of education needs to take place. Most physicians do not grow up in an era of precision medicine. It's barely discussed in medical schools.

Obviously, this education has to go

beyond the realm of precision medicine.

"You care too much about fashion to be smart" was a comment Oromendia once had when she was in graduate school. Whilst it is relatively female heavy in the field of biological research, it is less so when it comes to technology and probably even less in precision medicine. Often, Oromendia would find herself to be the youngest and the only person of Hispanic heritage in a meeting room full of men. She has had to remind herself not to be intimidated and has made it a priority to join and build teams that place a high value on diverse perspectives.

There is certainly a monoculture in technology but fortunately it's slowly changing," says Oromendia.

"I think such change only takes place when we focus and pay attention to it. Sometimes, people don't realize the

importance of diverse perspectives to getting the right answer. Because most of us don't know what we don't know, gathering diverse perspectives is the only way which allows us to assess the same problem from different angles. It's really a bit like the scientific process: identify as many unknowns as possible to get to the most accurate answer.

Ultimately, I think the presence of role models is also important as the culture in technology starts to change. As they share their, often non-linear, career stories, we'll all learn that technologists or scientists don't have to look like the stereotype, or have the traditional degrees or paths into the field. By being out there in the community, supporting, educating, and bringing others along, role models will push the next generation to see something new in themselves. ■

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