


# Anti-Racist Pediatric Research Against Discrimination in Science with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Özgür Kasapçopur 

Department of Pediatric Rheumatology, İstanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine, İstanbul, Turkey

Science is our most important asset and knowledge that will get us out of the COVID-19 infection, which is the greatest threat to humanity. Science has been advancing humanity for centuries, bringing it to brighter days. I think humanity first encountered science when fire was discovered. After this, while the dizzying speed of science with many developments took us forward, the supporters of "pseudoscience", who were against science, did not stand idle and continued to defame science and scientists. Different tendencies that arise within science itself want to take science further back from the point it has reached. At this point, the most important threats are racism and discrimination.<sup>1-7</sup>

Although the COVID-19 infection continues at its peak today, scientists are trying to save humanity from this infection at great speed both in the world and in our country. Scientists have now begun to unravel all the secrets of the disease, and with the drugs-vaccines found, the disease will hopefully disappear from our world in a short time. While scientists are working with great effort, the supporters of "pseudoscience" do not stand idle and try to destroy the hope of humanity with fake data and inappropriate studies violating ethical rules. At this point, the chance to reach medicine and vaccination is disrupted for our children due to discrimination.<sup>1,2,4,5</sup>

As we mentioned before, one of the most important obstacles to science and scientific developments is racism and discrimination. Humanity experienced the most important example of this in the Tuskegee study conducted on patients with syphilis, which began in 1932. African-American male patients were deprived of all treatment options for nearly 50 years, despite the fact that a remedy was found for the disease.<sup>3,8,9</sup>

During the COVID pandemic, race discrimination has continued. There has been significant inequality in access to both vaccines and treatment. All pediatricians, physicians and pediatric institutions should have taken an action against this negativity. The first action on this issue was performed by the Canadian Pediatric Association, because, as all the pediatricians in the world, we knew that we had to leave a world free from racism, both to humanity and to our children. This is a task given to us by humanity. We had to create an antiracist research ecosystem for our children. At this point, all research ethical boards, research planners, and pediatric researchers should remember the main rules of science once again, and every datum should be implemented with an anti-racist, egalitarian and discrimination-free logic. Let's try to review once again the main rules of universal science below.<sup>3-5</sup>

Science is real and depends only on reality, it is not personal. Science is open to public criticism and can always be tried. In this respect, it is not subjective, it is objective. The scientific process is completely free from prejudices. When it comes to objectivity in science, it should be understood that objective facts and cases should be reflected as they are, not as desired. In a scientific study, the tendency to pretend that the result did not happen with false and made-up data is diametrically opposite to the basic principles of science. There is no place for dogma in science, being scientific requires being open to self-criticism from a critical point of view. Scientific work has gone through many tests for centuries, and its values have not been denied.<sup>1,2</sup>

Science arises from vital needs and observation: It realizes an increase in information production activities, which arise from inquiries about knowing the sources of human basic needs. Science is generalizing. Although the facts develop everywhere according to their

own conditions, they occur within the general rules. Science is universal. Science has to be known by the broad masses. Since science is directly related to life, it is for everyone as well as for life itself, that is, it concerns everyone in life. Science knows no borders and is all anti-racist. It is free from discrimination. It takes diversity, equity and inclusion as its main guide.<sup>1-3</sup>

Science is selective. The selectivity of science depends on which of the observations is tested by means of a hypothesis. Once the purpose of the research has been determined, the scientist has no right to change the direction of the research or to direct it in the direction he wants, unless there is a major setback in the research method during the research. It is incompatible with the scientific method and unscientific to make the desired results and inferences instead of understanding and explaining what is happening. Therefore, the scientist should work independently and authentically. Science is based on logical principles. Science is predictive. Science makes predictions about the future based on the knowledge and results obtained from historical, social and natural events in the past, and taking into account the conditions of the day. All they do is for the unlimited good of humanity. Science demands freedom. Science research should be conducted in a free environment, scientists should be able to research on any subject that interests them, and these results should be shared with humanity in equity, away from all discrimination.<sup>1-4,6</sup>

We have devoted the editorial in this issue of "Turkish Archives of Pediatrics" to reminding the scientific method and anti-racist initiatives. Even in the book of Olcay Neyzi, one of the founders of pediatrics in our country, who we lost in February 2022, racist attempts are mentioned. Humanity will one day live with happy children in the world with an indiscriminate perspective and we

will live as happy Pediatricians. "We believe that scientists and pediatricians who believe in science and science equality and who are far from discrimination will win this war on earth, the light of science will brightly illuminate the whole earth and our children."<sup>1,3-5,10</sup>

## REFERENCES

1. Kasapçopur Ö. Scientific researches and academic publishing during the coronavirus pandemic. *Turk Pediatr Ars.* 2020;55(3):213-214. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
2. Kasapçopur Ö. Science and pseudoscience during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Turk Pediatr Ars.* 2020;55(4):335-336. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
3. Smile S, Williams A. A time to act: anti-racist paediatric research. *Paediatr Child Health.* 2021;26(5):276-278. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
4. Blankenburg R, Poitevien P, Gonzalez Del Rey J, et al. Dismantling racism: association of pediatric program directors' commitment to action. *Acad Pediatr.* 2020;20(8):1051-1053. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
5. Kasapçopur Ö, Big A. A Big Problem and debate in COVID-19 pandemics: equitable and effective access of the COVID-19 vaccines and waiver of intellectual property. *Turk Arch Pediatr.* 2021;56(4):283-284. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
6. Smile S, Williams A. Eliminating racism in research. *CMAJ.* 2021;193(14):E489. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
7. Nath S, Sethi S, Bastos JL, et al. A global perspective of racial-ethnic inequities in dental caries: protocol of systematic review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2022;19(3):1390. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
8. Cerceo E, Zimmerman M, DeLisser HM. Diversity, equity, and inclusion: moving from performance to transformation through the arts and humanities. *J Gen Intern Med.* 2022. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
9. Sanders M, Fiscella K. Anti-racism training using the biopsychosocial model: Frederick Douglas' earthquake, whirlwind, storm and fire. *Front Psychiatry.* 2021;12:711966. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
10. Neyzi O. *Bir çocuk doktorunun not defterinden: Durmayalım Düşeriz.* Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları; 2022.