

EDITORIAL

A Path Forward

Mitchell S. V. Elkind , MD, MS; Robert A. Harrington, MD; Donald M. Lloyd-Jones, MD, ScM

In March, the *Journal of the American Heart Association (JAHA)* published an article entitled “Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity: Evolution of Race and Ethnicity Considerations for the Cardiology Workforce in the United States of America From 1969 to 2019”, authored by Norman C. Wang, MD, MS, from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC)¹.

Several months after the article was published, the American Heart Association’s (AHA’s) leadership was alerted to specific concerns about the integrity of the article, which prompted AHA to explore the editorial processes that enabled its publication. The article became the subject of significant discussion within the medical community and beyond because of its conclusions about the representation of Black and Hispanic trainees in medicine and, specifically, in the field of cardiology. In the article, Dr Wang advocated ending racial and ethnic preferences for undergraduate and medical school admissions, and for postgraduate medical training.

The AHA explicitly opposes the views in the article as those views are contrary to our core values of inclusion and run counter to long-standing association programs and policies to increase diversity in cardiovascular-related specialties. Diversity is critical for the healthcare and research communities, and ultimately society as a whole, to fully benefit from the variety of experiences and perspectives that exist within historically excluded communities.

The author’s institution, UPMC, requested that the AHA and the editorially independent *JAHA* retract the published article on the basis of specific scientific errors as well as misleading and incomplete quotations. *JAHA* and the AHA agreed completely with retraction. In addition, the AHA conducted a substantive review of editorial

processes that allowed a flawed article to be published; the association issued a full public statement.²

In the best interest of the public and the scientific research community, *JAHA* is now welcoming high-quality manuscript submissions on the issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the medical profession and their impact on health care. A guest editor has been identified to review all submissions and select manuscripts to be published. In addition, *Circulation* and *Stroke*, other leading AHA journals, are already planning issues devoted to diversity and health equity.

More important, investigatory findings and recommendations related to the internal review of the AHA’s current scientific publishing process will be considered and implemented in collaboration with the AHA’s Scientific Publishing Committee. We pledge to work to ensure that the accuracy and integrity of the AHA scientific publications remain above reproach and that the association’s values are never compromised.

No organization nor journal is perfect, and the AHA pledges that we can and must do better.³

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Affiliations

From the Departments of Neurology and Epidemiology, Columbia University, New York, NY (M.S.V.E.); Preventive Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL (R.A.H.); and Department of Medicine, Stanford University, Stanford, CA (D.M.L.-J.).

Sources of Funding

None.

Disclosures

Dr. Elkind is president of the American Heart Association. Dr. Harrington is immediate past president of the American Heart Association. Dr.

Key Words: Editorials ■ Cultural diversity ■ Medical education ■ Public policy ■ Residency and Internship

Correspondence to: Mitchell S. V. Elkind, MD, American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Ave, Dallas, TX 75231. E-mail: mse13@columbia.edu

The opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily those of the editors or of the American Heart Association.

© 2020 The Authors. Published on behalf of the American Heart Association, Inc., by Wiley. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

JAHA is available at: www.ahajournals.org/journal/jaha

Lloyd-Jones is president-elect of the American Heart Association. None of the authors receive personal compensation from the American Heart Association.

REFERENCES

1. Wang NC. Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity: Evolution of Race and Ethnicity Considerations for the Cardiology Workforce in the United States of America From 1969 to 2019. [retracted in: *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2020;9:e014602. DOI: 10.1161/JAHA.119.014602] . *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2020;9:e015959. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1161/JAHA.120.015959>.
2. American Heart Association. Wang paper is wrong: diversity, equity and inclusiveness in medicine and cardiology are important and necessary: UPDATED statement from the American Heart Association. 2020. <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/wang-paper-is-wrong-diversity-equity-and-inclusiveness-in-medicine-and-cardiology-are-important-and-necessary>. Accessed August 24, 2020.
3. American Heart Association. Diversity and inclusion in research and cardiology. 2020. <https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/diversity-inclusion/diversity-and-inclusion-in-research-and-cardiology>.