



VERITY Newsletter

A newsletter brought to you by VERITY at Brigham & Women's Hospital

JANUARY 2022

VERITY Updates

- **Applications for the VERITY 2022 courses are due February 1st, 2022 VERITY course.** More details below.

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Actionable Strategies for a More Diverse Rheumatology Research Training Force

In July 2021, VERITY partnered with Howard University to host the Forum on Diversity in the Rheumatology Research Workforce. This 90-minute forum addressed barriers and opportunities to recruit and retain a more diverse research workforce in rheumatology. Dr. Irene Blanco of Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Dr. Valerie Stone of Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Dr. Gail Kerr of Howard and Georgetown University Hospitals, presented. The virtual forum had a robust discussion led by Dr. Candace Feldman of Brigham and Women's Hospital. The forum led to a commentary, currently under review, with a brief synopsis of several key points described below:

Central to a more diverse rheumatology workforce is a strong institutional commitment. Institutions must prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts and establish a concrete action plan with leadership, financial resources and measurable outcomes to ensure accountability. Pipeline programs should be developed to recruit, train and retain underrepresented in medicine (URiM) trainees, introducing them to rheumatology and rheumatology-related research early in their careers. Institutions should recognize the importance of mentorship and multifaceted support for URiM trainees and faculty. For additional information on diversity issues and this upcoming commentary, please visit the "Forum on Diversity in the Rheumatology Research Workforce" page on the VERITY website (<https://www.verityresearch.org/>); we will highlight this work once it is accepted for publication.

VERITY Publications

Wallace ZS, Sparks JA. Therapeutic drug monitoring for immune-mediated inflammatory diseases. JAMA. 2021 Dec 21;326(23):2370-2372.

Patel NJ, D'Silva KM, Hsu TY, Dilorio M, Fu X, Cook C, Prisco L, Martin L, Vanni KMM, Zaccardelli A, Zhang Y, Sparks JA, Wallace ZS. Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outcomes Among Recipients of Anti-CD20 Monoclonal Antibodies for Immune-Mediated Diseases: A Comparative Cohort Study. ACR Open Rheumatol. 2021 Dec 10.

Esposito AJ*, Sparks JA*, Gill RR, Hatabu H, Schmidlin EJ, Hota P, Fletcher EA, Poli S, Fletcher EA, Xiong W, Frits ML, Iannaccone CK, Prado MG, Zaccardelli A, Marshall AA, Dellaripa PF, Weinblatt ME, Shadick NA, Rosas IO, Doyle TJ. Screening for preclinical parenchymal lung disease in rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatology. 2021 Dec 7;keab891. *Contributed equally.

Yoshida K, Glynn RJ, Choi HK, Everett BM, Li Y, MacFadyen JG, Ridker PM, Solomon DH. Causal mediation analysis of the relationship of canakinumab's effect against subsequent gout flares and high-sensitivity C-reactive protein in CANTOS. Arthritis Care Res (Hoboken). 2021 Dec 7.

Roofeh D, Barratt SL, Wells AU, Kawano-Dourado L, Tashkin D, Strand V, Seibold J, Proudman S, Brown KK, Dellaripa PF, Doyle TJ, Leonard T, Matteson E, Oddis C, Solomon J, Sparks JA, Vasallo R, Maxwell L, Beaton D, Christensen R, Townsend W, Khanna D. Outcome measurement instrument selection for lung physiology in systemic sclerosis associated interstitial lung disease: A systematic review using the OMERACT Filter 2.1 process. Semin Arthritis Rheum. 2021 Dec;51(6):1331-1341.

Sparks JA. Towards clinical significance of the <i>MUC5B</i> promoter variant and risk of rheumatoid arthritis-associated interstitial lung disease. Ann Rheum Dis. 2021 Dec;80(12):1503-1504.

Lauffenburger JC, Haff N, McDonnell ME, Solomon DH, Antman EM, Glynn RJ, Choudhry NK. Exploring patient experiences coping with using multiple medications: a qualitative interview study. BMJ Open. 2021 Nov 22;11(11):e046860.

Conway R, Grimshaw AA, Konig MF, Putman M, Duarte-Garcia A, Tseng LY, Cabrera DM, Chock YPE, Degirmenci HB, Duff E, Egeli BH, Graef ER, Gupta A, Harkins P, Boyer BF, Jayatilleke A, Jun S, Kasia C, Khilnani A, Kilian A, Kim AHJ, Lin CMA, Low C, Proulx L, Sattui SE, Singh N, Sparks JA, Tam H, Ugarte-Gil MF, Ung N, Wang K, Wise LM, Yang Z, Young KJ, Liew JW, Grainger R, Wallace ZS, Hsieh E. SARS-CoV-2 infection and COVID-19 outcomes in rheumatic disease: A systematic literature review and meta-analysis. Arthritis Rheumatol. 2021 Nov 22.

Yeoh SA, Young K, Putman M, Sattui S, Conway R, Graef E, Kilian A, Konig M, Sparks JA, Ugarte-Gil M, Upton L, Berenbaum F, Bhana S, Costello W, Hausmann J, Machado P, Robinson P, Sirotych E, Sufka P, Yazdany J, Liew J, Grainger R, Wallace Z, Jayatilleke A; Global Rheumatology Alliance. Rapid Adoption of Telemedicine in Rheumatology Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic Highlights Training and Supervision Concerns Among Rheumatology Trainees. ACR Open Rheumatol. 2021 Nov 17.

VERITY Member Spotlight: Mia T. Chandler, M.D., M.P.H.

Mia T. Candler, MD MPH, is a second-year fellow in pediatric rheumatology at Boston Children's Hospital. As a rheumatology fellow, Dr. Chandler's clinical and research efforts are focused on understanding health disparities among patients with rheumatologic disease.

As a Commonwealth Fund Fellow in Minority Health Equity (2019-2020), she was motivated to work to empower young women as a strategy to reduce health, economic, and educational inequities. Dr. Chandler partnered with The American City Coalition to assess the empowerment resources available to girls and young women in the Nubian Square Neighborhood of Roxbury, MA. She developed a survey tool to quantitatively assess the quality of existing empowerment programming for girls and young women in Roxbury. This work resulted in the development of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis and multi-year strategic plan to engage stakeholders in the process of addressing the gaps in empowerment resources.



Working with her mentor, Dr. Candace Feldman, she is currently studying racial differences in glucocorticoid use among Medicaid beneficiaries with systemic lupus erythematosus and presented this as an oral abstract at the American College of Rheumatology conference this past November. This study found that Black, Hispanic and Asian individuals with SLE had significantly greater odds of persistent higher dose glucocorticoid use compared with White individuals with SLE. The association remained after adjusting for comorbidities, medication use, a SLE risk adjustment index, and health care utilization.

Dr. Chandler received a VERITY Pilot Grant with her mentor Dr. Feldman and P30 bioinformatics experts Dr. Katherine Liao and Dr. Tianrun (Austin) Cai to evaluate the feasibility of applying natural language processing (NLP) to extract information on three social determinant of health (SDoH) needs - housing instability/homelessness, food insecurity, and financial insecurity. The future goal is to apply NLP methods to other SDoH to better identify vulnerable patients with rheumatic conditions.

Finally, mentored by Dr. Peter Nigrovic and in close partnership with her co-fellow in the Division of Immunology at Boston Children's, Dr. Chandler designed a pilot mentorship program tailored to the needs of underrepresented minorities in medicine URiM called Career Advancement Through Community at Harvard (CATCH).

This program, organized through the NIAMS P30-funded Joint Biology Consortium (JBC), matches local faculty mentors to URiM Harvard Medical Students and Boston Children's Hospital trainees for purpose of career guidance and fostering a stronger sense of community among them.

Supported by her mentors, Drs. Candace Feldman, Mary Beth Son, Peter Nigrovic, and Marcy Bolster, Dr. Chandler hopes to lead efforts to reduce disparities in rheumatic disease care and outcomes. As an early career investigator, she plans to continue to study factors that impact the quality of life of children and families managing chronic rheumatology diseases and to engage stakeholders across multiple sectors to implement evidence-based patient-community empowerment interventions to advance health equity.

***For each issue, the newsletter will feature a VERITY member. For more information, please contact Jackie Stratton (jstratton1@bwh.harvard.edu) or visit [verityresearch.org](https://www.verityresearch.org) to become a VERITY member.

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