



## Thoracic surgery research on a “larger” scale

In this special issue of the *Journal of Thoracic Diseases*, the Editor-In-Chief, Professor Jie He, has graciously given the editors and authors a wonderful opportunity to highlight the value of outcomes research on a scale that is beyond that of each of our individual institutions. Hence, this special issue is entitled, “Population-based Research and Outcomes Associated with Thoracic Diseases” and is dedicated to providing the readers insights and guidance into pursuing outstanding science at the population level. By population-based research and outcomes, the spirit of this theme captures many topics that fall under the category of Population Sciences. As the National Cancer Institute indicates, there are a number of different program areas that fall under the title of Population Sciences including Behavioral Research, Epidemiology and Genomics, Healthcare Delivery Research, Implementation Science, Surveillance, and Survivorship (1).

Many authors of this special issue are members of the Thoracic Surgery Outcomes Research Network (ThORN) (2). This assembly of thoracic surgeon-scientists includes those individuals and institutions who have special expertise in pursuing population-based research and outcomes studies. Perhaps more important, these clinical scientists also possess a strong interest in collaborating while pursuing their studies under the rubric of Population Sciences. Given the ease with which communication is achieved globally in the modern era, a current rate limiting step to accomplishing similar goals sometimes may pertain simply to not knowing who shares common interests. Introducing ThORN in this format is to enlighten the international thoracic diseases community that there is a grass roots organization that is working toward enlarging the community in which we can collaborate with ease.

The all-encompassing nature of Population Sciences indicates there are several areas that can be studied for scholarship or fellowship. As such, when the landscape of study is so vast, providing some level of guidance is important in establishing an infrastructure, locally or globally, for the pursuit of good science. The use of the term “larger” in this editorial that accompanies this special issue, carries different meanings. given that some population-based studies employ large data sets, the term “larger” can be interpreted literally as studying thoracic diseases using substantial numbers. While there is a certain value associated with these types of investigations, the contributors of this special issue maintain that “larger” should also be taken to mean looking beyond just the quantitative aspects. in perhaps a more relevant sense, the term “larger” should be interpreted as providing a broader and deeper understanding regarding population-based investigations. More specifically, the sophistication of the analyses underpinning population-based research and outcomes studies is evolving in a manner commensurate with that of the translational or basic sciences. We have moved beyond institutional case series as the backbone of clinical research and have transitioned to population-based research which allows for an enhanced generalizability and yields an additional opportunity for the implementation of research findings. Consequently, there is a greater need to understand the more sophisticated and complex methodology employed to arrive at a set of results and conclusions in order to appreciate the central message of publications dealing with population-based studies. The mixture of reviews and original articles presented in this special issue are intended to enhance the readers understanding of some of the intricacies of applying specific principles into their clinical research practices. Additionally, the topics presented may introduce and inform the readers about certain elements of population science techniques that they may come across in the near future including ones with which they may not be familiar.

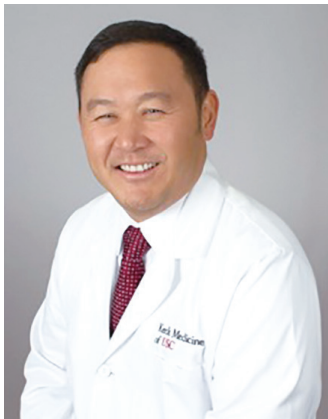
Undoubtedly, the research that is presented consistently in the *Journal of Thoracic Diseases* achieves an already high threshold of quality. The purpose of this special edition is to underscore the value of appreciating research that includes and impacts the international community at-large when it comes to the Population Sciences. While a publication to capture every single topic related to the Population Sciences would incorporate volumes upon volumes of material, this special edition is intended to highlight interesting components or facets of population-based research and outcomes studies that can be both relevant and useful to all clinical investigators. Even for the clinician-scientists who already possess expertise in population-based studies and outcomes research, this special edition should serve as a high-caliber recapitulation of the existing scientific data as well as a presentation and discussion of some thought-provoking ideas and viewpoints. Again, we are grateful for the opportunity to showcase some noteworthy concepts and perspectives within the domain of Population Sciences and hope that the readers will find the information in the articles informative, useful, and enjoyable.

## Acknowledgements

None.

## References

1. Available online: <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/>
2. ThORN. Thoracic Surgery Outcomes Research Network. Available online: <http://thoracicoutcomes.org/>



Anthony W. Kim



Elizabeth A. David



David T. Cooke

**Anthony W. Kim, MD, MS<sup>1,2</sup>**

(Email: [anthony.kim@med.usc.edu](mailto:anthony.kim@med.usc.edu))

**Elizabeth A. David, MD, MAS<sup>1,2</sup>**

(Email: [elizabethadavid@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethadavid@gmail.com))

**David T. Cooke, MD<sup>1,2</sup>**

(Email: [dtcooke@ucdavis.edu](mailto:dtcooke@ucdavis.edu))

<sup>1</sup>Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA;

<sup>2</sup>The University of California, Davis Health, Sacramento, CA, USA.

doi: 10.21037/jtd.2019.03.06

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**View this article at:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/jtd.2019.03.06>

**Cite this article as:** Kim AW, David EA, Cooke DT. Thoracic surgery research on a “larger” scale. *J Thorac Dis* 2019;11(Suppl 4):S485-S486. doi: 10.21037/jtd.2019.03.06