


Addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the JNCI Journals

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The *Journal of the National Cancer Institute (JNCI)* has a long tradition of regularly publishing scientific articles and commentaries that have dealt with a wide range of epidemiological, clinical, policy, and economic issues focused on disparities and inequities in cancer incidence, outcomes, and care. *JNCI Cancer Spectrum*, an open access publication, joined JNCI in this tradition and has published articles on these important topics since its launch in 2017. As we approached the beginning of 2022, the Editors of JNCI and *JNCI Cancer Spectrum*, with strong support from our publisher, Oxford University Press, decided to launch a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) initiative. We recognize that many groups are underrepresented in cancer research in terms of the conduct of that research (clinicians, researchers, and patients) and its publication (authorship and peer review). By underrepresented groups, we refer to those of all ethnicities, races, colors, religions, sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities, national origins, disabilities, ages, or other individual status such as geography and career stage. Our DE&I initiative signals our commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion of these underrepresented groups in the peer review process and dissemination of this research in our journals. Please see our full DE&I statement on our website.

We welcome and encourage submissions from authors of all backgrounds. We are taking a number of immediate actions to increase the accessibility of the submission process for our journals to authors, including allowing “format-free” initial submissions and making our author guidelines (and all communications) as clear and concise as possible. To help prospective authors who are not confident in the quality of their English, our publisher has partnered with an independent language editing provider to offer editing services. We have signed on to participate in this partnership and through this collaboration, JNCI and *JNCI Cancer Spectrum* authors will be able to receive editing and translation services at a discount. (Authors are under no obligation to use the service and it does not guarantee their manuscript will be reviewed externally or accepted for publication.) Also, we want to bring attention to our post-publication name change policy. We are committed to working with

authors who wish to update their name following article publication and will make such changes upon request, while respecting the author’s privacy throughout the process.

To support the editorial review and appraisal of our content, we have previously focused our DE&I efforts on ensuring gender equality and geographic representation for Associate Editors, Editorial Board members, and peer reviewers. From its launch, *JNCI Cancer Spectrum* was very focused on creating an international profile for its list of Associate Editors. However, we know we can and must do better, and are committed to improving the inclusiveness of our Editorial Boards and peer reviewer pool. We will encourage our Associate Editors to submit the names of potential reviewers from underrepresented groups when possible to help diversify our peer reviewer pool, and are exploring the possibility of self-nomination of qualified peer reviewers from underrepresented groups. We will also continue to regularly assess our Editorial Boards and intensify efforts to recruit members from diverse backgrounds. These efforts will further support our long-standing goal of ensuring that we are supporting all individuals, including those in underrepresented groups, during the manuscript submission process.

Regarding the content we publish, we have already made several changes to journal requirements and style guidelines to support the DE&I initiative. The journals adopted the *AMA Manual of Style* (11th edition) updates on Race and Ethnicity (1), which are largely reflected in our author guidelines (see the JNCI Author Guidelines and *JNCI Cancer Spectrum* Author Guidelines). We are also addressing the use of bias-free language in our copyediting process. With these initial changes in our editorial processes, we hope to insure our content is consistently being presented in an inclusive and bias-free manner.

We welcome submissions on topics relevant to DE&I and cancer. Our journals will be publishing a virtual collection of specially curated articles that relate to DE&I in cancer research. This collection will be regularly updated and will serve as a central hub for clinicians and researchers to highlight the importance of DE&I in cancer research. JNCI has also planned a series of publications with an accompanying editorial that will focus

on the social determinants of health and how they affect cancer care and outcomes. Please look forward to these in fall 2022.

Finally, we recognize that any DE&I policy initiative will be insufficient to sustain the changes we are hoping for without the sincere commitment of all those involved in scientific publication. We look forward to making the changes outlined above as well as others at JNCI and *JNCI Cancer Spectrum* and hope that our readers and contributors will join us in moving this agenda forward in 2022 and beyond.

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Reference

1. Frey T, Young RK. Correct and preferred usage. In: Christiansen S, Iverson C, Flanagan A, et al., eds. *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors* 11th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2020. <https://www.amamanualofstyle.com/view/10.1093/jama/9780190246556.001.0001/med-9780190246556-chapter-11>. Accessed January 31, 2022.