Advancing *Pediatrics* During Turbulent Times

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As journal editors, we strive to publish high-quality, clinically relevant articles to help our readers improve health outcomes for children and adolescents and advance the field of pediatrics. In our roles as editors, pediatricians, and parents, we recognize the immense direct and indirect impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on patients, families, communities, and all who provide pediatric health care services. These turbulent times are often overwhelming and accompanied by a feeling that these challenging times will never end. We have great admiration for the innovative work that continues to be submitted despite these challenges to our journal by clinicians, researchers, and policymakers to help us understand and address the changing clinical needs of our patients and improve well-being for our patients, their families, and ourselves. As we described in our annual commentary last year, we continue our focus on addressing systemic racism in the articles that we publish.1 We are grateful for the authors who have shared their work with us and the feedback from our readers on this critical issue.

We all learned important lessons from articles we published in the last year about the role of systemic racism in the risk of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality, the likelihood of receiving COVID-19 testing and vaccination, the exacerbation of adverse social determinants of health, and the development or worsening of depression or suicidality. As a result, we have become more committed to providing a forum in our journal to address systemic racism, and developing strategies to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. This past year, we introduced a regular feature section dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion specifically focused on addressing these issues. Please see our author guidelines if you are interested in learning more (pediatrics.aappublications.org/page/author-guidelines).

We are also committed to ensuring that issues of equity and systemic racism are appropriately addressed in all sections of the journal, which led us to update our instructions to authors regarding the appropriate use of race and ethnicity to ensure that race and ethnicity are considered to reflect a social construct, instead of differences in biological factors.1 We also ask our reviewers to pay specific attention to the appropriate use of race and ethnicity when they evaluate a manuscript. This change has led to important improvements in how authors communicate complex issues related to systemic racism.

We also continue to work to ensure that the composition of the editorial board represents the diverse demographics of the broader community of children and adolescents that we serve. We recognize that we could improve the journal by expanding the range of experiences represented by editorial board members. To do so, we have expanded the inclusion of nonpediatric health care professionals and public members onto our editorial board. For example,
last year we created a new associate
editor position for a nonpediatrician
public member to oversee our Family
Partnerships articles and to develop
strategies to improve communication
with the public. After a national search
process that yielded many qualified
candidates, Ms. Cara Coleman, the
director of public policy and advocacy
for Family Voices, was selected for this
position. This month, Ms. Coleman will
be launching a blog that offers family
perspectives on research articles
published in the journal. The articles
discussed in this blog will be provided
free to the public online, with the hope
these blogs and articles will lead to
important new conversations between
pediatricians, patients, and their families.

To help further disseminate important
findings from studies published in
Pediatrics, our editorial team has been
invited to participate in the new
weekly American Academy of
Pediatrics (AAP) podcast “Pediatrics
On Call,” which can be found at www.
aap.org/podcast/. The first week of
each month, we preview the current
issue and highlight new findings that
could improve practice. Authors from
some of the studies we publish are
also featured in subsequent weekly
episodes of the podcasts each month.

We are also proud that our new
journal Web site went live in
November 2021. We heard from our
readers about the need for easier
access to all our content, including
published articles, blogs, videos, and
other social media content, which all
help make the articles we publish in
Pediatrics even more front and
center in daily practice. The online
location of the main journal Web
site has not changed (pediatrics.
aappublications.org); however, the
AAP has developed a new integrated
Web platform, “AAP Publications”
(publications.aap.org), as a central
location for all its journals, including
Pediatrics and journal-related
content, as well as AAP News, Point-
of-Care Solutions, the AAP Red Book,
and other published books. This
unified platform gives our readers
one-stop access to all AAP content.

Even with the new and easier ways to
find published articles, our editorial
board is committed to making high-
impact studies available to those who
are not AAP members or subscribers
through open-access publication.
Currently, we have three strategies for
open-access publication. First, we select
articles each week to be freely
available. These include all clinical
policy recommendations and articles
that are of critical importance to the
field. For example, all COVID-19–related
articles and all articles that address
systemic racism have been made open
access. Second, articles not initially
published as open access are freely
available 1 year after publication and
remain open to the public without a
subscription or download fee for 4
years. Finally, authors are given 2
options for having their work made
open access. The “green” open access
option is available at no charge to
nongovernmental institutions that
require a version of a pre-edited
version of the accepted paper on their
online repository with the copyright
and final copyedited version remaining
with the AAP. The final version of
green open-access publications is
embargoed for 1 year. The “gold”
open-access option is available for a fee
to government funders who mandate
open access or for authors who would
prefer to own the copyright of the
article so that they can immediately
release their study to the public. The
gold option fee covers the production
cost for the publication. Authors who
choose the gold option must still agree
to attribute the article to the AAP as
the publisher and to allow the AAP to
produce the publication, such as in the
journal, on the Web site, or as part of a
thematic collection. More information
about these options is available at
pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/
pediatrics-open-access.

We are also excited to announce that
by 2023, we will be introducing
another way for authors to share their
work by the creation of a separate
and fully open-access journal. This
new journal will follow the same
editorial policies and have the same
high standards as Pediatrics. The new
journal will be managed by an
independent editorial board that will
include 2 co-editors. We look forward
to sharing more information about
this new addition to our journal family
and will be putting out a call for
nominations for its editorial board
later this year. Be reassured that even
with a new AAP open-access journal,
Pediatrics will continue to publish the
important and original pediatric
research on which readers depend.

Thus, even during these turbulent times,
Pediatrics has grown and changed to
help everyone vested in improving the
health and well-being of children. We
are committed to maintaining our
mission of providing timely, evidence-
base d scientific information and
supporting lifelong learning. We look
forward to your ongoing feedback to
make sure our mission is achieved now
and long after this pandemic has ended.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge Mr.
Joe Puskarz, AAP director of journal
publishing, and Ms. Kate Larson, senior
managing editor of Pediatrics, for their
assistance in preparing this manuscript.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAP: American Academy of
Pediatrics
COVID-19: coronavirus disease
2019

REFERENCES

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