

Racism and the status quo

When the status quo in science continues to perpetuate ingrained systems of discrimination, inequality and racism, the beneficiaries of these systems must not only reexamine their collective practices but also redress historical injustices through consequential, concrete actions that will lead to change. We cannot focus only on the first steps of listening and learning to build a better, fairer scientific community. We at *Nature Genetics* fully commit to pledging our energy and efforts toward long-term goals explicitly designed to fundamentally transform how science and its dissemination are conducted.

That the death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer was required to spur the current widespread reckoning over anti-Black racism not only in the United States but globally, across sectors, is a shameful reality. The pain that Black families and the Black community have had to endure time and again cannot be ignored. Black Lives Matter. In the scientific community, Black students, researchers and professors are forced to contend with this horrifying psychological burden while also facing racial discrimination, implicit bias and systemic racism within research settings at all levels. This situation must change. The genetics field in particular has a dark history involving racist ideologies, and there are [repugnant examples of genetics being weaponized against Black people](#). Therefore, we as geneticists have a heightened responsibility to address racial injustice.

Merely acknowledging these pervasive inequalities will not suffice. We must create environments where diversity in science flourishes at all levels; we must foster desire among under-represented groups of people to undertake such a career path in the first place, then make staying on that path possible.

All this is easy to say but much harder to do. We at *Nature Genetics* recognize that we have been complicit in maintaining inequitable systems and that allowing these systems to go unchanged contributes to deeper injustice. Therefore, we are examining what we can do as a journal, while simultaneously committing to work

with the broader scientific community to collectively establish equal opportunities and a more just society for all. Together, we must build a new system and work to eliminate racism from personal and professional life.

We invite submissions of Comment and Correspondence articles from researchers at any career stage wishing to share their experiences of racism in science. We will use *Nature Genetics* to help increase the wider community's awareness of the inherent biases and the racism, both subtle and blatant, that the Black scientific community experiences.

We are working on expanding the diversity of our referee pool and on commissioning Perspective and Review articles from Black scientists, and we will use our social-media platforms to amplify Black scientists' voices. We commit to doing our part in trying to change the prevailing assumptions about who gets to be considered an expert. Bringing more diversity of thought to the table is not just a moral imperative—this diversity also stops science from becoming an echo chamber. We will do a much better job in welcoming more participants in the publication process.

We are refocusing our outreach efforts to prioritize visiting institutes that support students from minority ethnic groups, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). We travel to many academic institutes to talk about publishing, to meet students and faculty, and to discuss research. We are expanding these visits to learn more about the science that is being done in a wider range of universities

and to share our expertise on navigating the publication process with a much broader group.

We will contact associations of graduate students from minority ethnic groups to provide them with resources and information on editorial careers. We are also evaluating our own internal operations at the journal level and the company level, and are working to create an environment that not only attracts applicants from diverse groups but also supports and advances employees from under-represented groups throughout their careers.

We ask to be held accountable for our actions and our output. Our editorial meetings include dedicated time for discussing these issues and activities, and we will continually monitor our progress. The onus is not on the Black community to do the work for us, but our communication channels are open, and we want to hear if we could be doing anything differently or better.

We know that these proposals are not sufficient for addressing the problem of systemic racism throughout science and the world. But we commit our journal to playing its part in being an instrument for change. We have a responsibility to work toward equality, not just increased diversity. Condemning racism is not enough; we pledge to also actively fight against it. In science, this fight requires rejecting the status quo. □

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