



Institute for Health Equity Research

IHER

Annual Report 2021–2022



Icahn
School of
Medicine at
Mount
Sinai

*Institute for
Health Equity
Research*



Director's Welcome

We are proud to share with you the accomplishments of our IHER family over the past year. Our charge is unwavering—investigators at the Institute for Health Equity Research (IHER) have continued to make important contributions by conducting paradigm-shifting research, facilitating life-changing resources, and informing life-saving interventions. We are examining the causes and magnitude of health disparities affecting nonwhite, low-income, immigrant, uninsured, LGBTQ+, and other vulnerable populations across all ages, abilities, and genders. Our team of nationally renowned health equity researchers is fostering long-term collaborations with community organizations, change agents, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to build and implement innovative, durable solutions to achieve health equity.

The past year has been a period of remarkable growth for IHER. We expanded and strengthened the Institute's infrastructure, hiring new staff to support our growing initiatives and increasing our capacity to make tangible differences in the lives and health of diverse populations. As we are a start-up, just celebrating our second anniversary, we are also intentionally and carefully creating a culture of generosity, learning, understanding, and collaboration for all IHER members so we can all thrive as members of the communities of which we are all a part. As one of our key faculty shared, "I've never been happier in my career as I am to be here, at IHER, doing this work alongside you all."

We established a Mental Health Equity Research group led by Sidney Hankerson, MD, MBA, a pioneer in improving mental health through partnerships with Black churches and other faith-based organizations, professional sports teams, and youth organizations. We received one of the first grants given by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study how structural racism affects health in which we will determine the impact of health care segregation on processes and outcomes of care. We are leading the national effort to ensure research on long COVID keeps a sharp lens on equity and that individuals still suffering with post-COVID symptoms are shaping the research agenda. We were among the first six institutions in the country to receive the new, prestigious NIH FIRST grant, a novel approach to diversifying the biomedical research workforce. We are working alongside Mount Sinai Health System leadership to incorporate an equity lens into the delivery of care and the measurement of quality as Mount Sinai implements its Anti-Racism Roadmap.

We are honored to have the support of our IHER Task Force, which plays a key role in our ability to grow, from providing guidance for our team, to helping secure millions of dollars in funding, to supporting IHER's programs and initiatives.

We are pleased to share our 2021-2022 accomplishments and look forward to working together to forge a future more equitable for all.

Warmly,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Horowitz'.

Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH

Director, Institute for Health Equity Research
Professor, Population Health Science
and Policy, Medicine
Dean for Gender Equity in Science
and Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine
at Mount Sinai



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynne D. Richardson M.D.'.

Lynne Richardson, MD

Co-Director, Institute for Health Equity Research
Mount Sinai Endowed Professor of Emergency
Medicine and Health Equity Science
Professor, Population Health Science and Policy,
Artificial Intelligence and Human Health
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Task Force

“I am so grateful to our Task Force members for helping IHER to expand and grow by lending their time to our cause and connecting our community with persons and organizations who further bolster health equity across our pillars.”

—Richard A. Friedman

“It has been a true honor to serve on the IHER Task Force and to share the visions and goals of such a uniquely important institute. The ability to partner with—and learn from—experts in population health research to advance Mount Sinai’s cutting-edge work in promoting health equity has been nothing short of extraordinary.”

—Kimberley Harris

Lisa Opoku Busumbru

Partner, Goldman Sachs

Gerald J. Cardinale

Founder and Managing Partner
RedBird Capital Partners

Dr. Martin R. (Marty) Chavez

Partner and Vice Chairman
Sixth Street

Edith W. Cooper

Co-Founder, Medley

Margaret Crotty Riggs

President and CEO, JSI Research
and Training and World Education

Richard A. Friedman

Chairman, Goldman Sachs Asset Management

Kimberley D. Harris

Executive Vice President of Comcast Corporation
and General Counsel, NBCUniversal

Mellody L. Hobson

President and Co-CEO, Ariel Investments, LLC

Pablo Legorreta

CEO, Royalty Pharma

Kenneth B. Mehlman

Partner, Global Head of Public Affairs & Co-Head, KKR
Global Impact

Jodie Patterson

Author and Founder, Georgia & Doobop

Robert F. Savage

Co-Founder and Partner, KSH Capital LP

By the Numbers

28

Faculty Members

40

Affiliates

20

Staff



active IHER
investigator-led
research grants with
\$84 million in total
funding



\$239,000

in funding to exceptional scholars
for years 2021–2022 and 2022–2023



130+

publications in peer-reviewed
journals in the past year



NEARLY

1,000

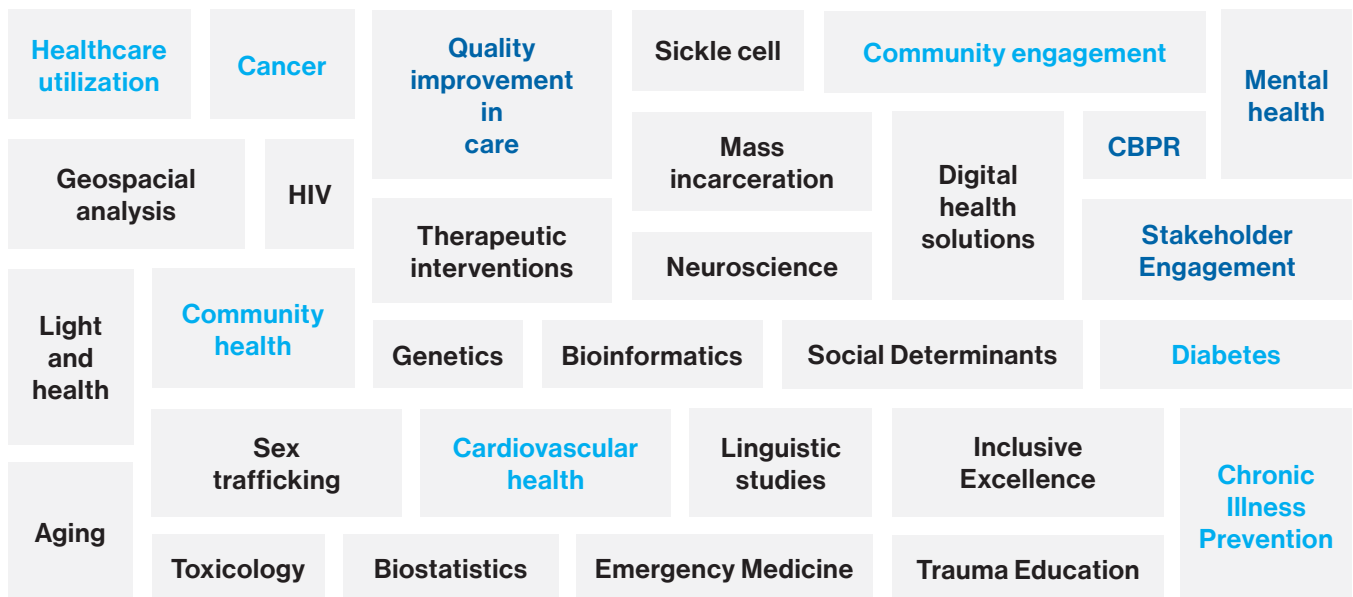
attendees of our virtual Health
Equity Seminar Series

IHER Faculty

“In diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

– Maya Angelou

IHER brings together a multidisciplinary team of experts to address the long-standing disparities in health and health care that are pervasive in our country.



Leadership



Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH

Director | Institute for Health Equity Research

Dean | Gender Equity in Science and Medicine

Professor | Population Health Science and Policy, Medicine, General Internal Medicine



Lynne Richardson, MD

Co-Director | Institute for Health Equity Research

Endowed Professor | Emergency Medicine and Health Equity Science

Professor | Population Health Science and Policy, Artificial Intelligence and Human Health

CORE and Research Group Directors



Emma Benn, DrPH

Founding Director, Center for Scientific Diversity
Associate Professor, Population Health Science and Policy
Associate Dean of Faculty, Well-being and Development



Sidney Hankerson, MD, MBA

Director, Mental Health Equity Research Group
Associate Professor
Vice Chair, Department of Psychiatry, Department of Population Health Science and Policy



Nina Bickell, MD

Director, Health Care Delivery Science Core
Professor, Population Health Science and Policy, Medicine, General Internal Medicine
Associate Director, Community Engaged and Equity Research
Co-Leader, Cancer Prevention and Control Program



Gordon (KaMing) Ngai, MD, MPH

Director, Immigrant, Cultural, and Linguistic Studies Research Group
Associate Professor, Emergency Medicine, Population Health Science and Policy, Medical Education



Nita Vangeepuram, MD, MPH

Associate Director, Community Engagement Core
Assistant Professor, Pediatrics, Environmental Medicine and Public Health, Population Health Science and Policy

Faculty members and Postdoctoral fellows

Donald Apakama, MD

Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine

Saadiah Bilal, MD

Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine

Kirk Campbell, MD

Professor, Medicine (Nephrology)
Vice Chair, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Director, Nephrology Fellowship Program
Director, Recruitment, Center for Scientific Diversity

Uraina Clark, PhD

Director of Research Development,
Center for Scientific Diversity

Mariana Figueiro, PHD

Professor, Population Health Science and Policy
Director, Light and Health Research Center

Leah L. Habersham MD MBA MS FACOG

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences

Stephanie H. Hernandez, MD

Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine

Louisa Holaday, MD

Assistant Professor, Medicine
(General Internal Medicine)

Utsha Khatri, MD

Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine,
Population Health Science and Policy,
Global Health and Health Systems Design

Tracy Layne, PhD, MPH

Assistant Professor, Population Health Science and Policy, and Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Science
Director of Mentorship Development,
Center for Scientific Diversity

Victoria Mayer, MD

Assistant Professor, Population Health Science and Policy, Medicine
(General Internal Medicine)

Sarah J. Miller, PsyD

Assistant Professor, Population Health Science and Policy, Family Medicine and Community Health, and Oncological Sciences
Director of Faculty Diversity and Inclusion,
Center for Scientific Diversity

Tiffany Mitchell, MD

Instructor, Emergency Medicine

Nihal E. Mohamed, PhD

Associate Professor, Urology and Psychology
Director of Patient Education and Behavioral Research; Education and Training, Center for Scientific Diversity

Dinushika Mohottige, MD, MPH

Assistant Professor, Institute of Health Equity Research
Mount Sinai Barbara T. Murphy Division of Nephrology

Girish Nadkarni, MD

Associate Professor, Medicine (Nephrology)
Clinical Director, Hasso Plattner Institute for Digital Health
Co-Director, Mount Sinai COVID Informatics Center
System Chief, Division of Data Driven and Digital Medicine (D3M), the Mount Sinai Clinical Intelligence Center
Director of the Charles Bronfman Institute for Personalized Medicine

Kathryn Roberson, PhD

Postdoctoral Fellow, Mental Health Equity Research Group

Joshua Safer, MD

Professor, Medicine (Endocrinology, Diabetes and Bone Disease)
Executive Director, Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery

Jamilia Sly, PhD

Assistant Professor, Population Health Science and Policy, Family Medicine and Community Health, and Oncological Sciences
Director of Anti-Racist Community Research and Outreach, Center for Scientific Diversity

Kimberly Souffront PhD, RN, FNP-BC

Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine
Associate Director Center of Nursing Research and Innovation

Shameeke Taylor, MD

Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine

Engaging With Our Community

IN THE MEDIA


- Lynne Richardson, MD, discussed how racism affects both mental and physical health in [Rising Above the Health Toll of Racism](#).
- Carol Horowitz, MD, PhD, participated in *The Atlantic's* exciting Next Scientific Revolution event to discuss the role of artificial intelligence in health equity progress. You can learn more about the event and watch videos of the seminar, including Dr. Horowitz's [here](#).
- Sidney Hankerson, MD, MBA, participated in the Aspen Ideas Festival where he spoke about mental health equity and how to develop interventions to prevent and reduce the onset of illnesses. Watch a short recap [here](#).
- Nita Vangeepuram, MD, MPH, provided insights on how increased community engagement and participation improves clinical research for *The Human Subject* podcast. You can access the episode [here](#).



HEALTH EQUITY SEMINAR SPEAKER SERIES

During this past year, we launched the IHER Health Equity Seminar Speaker Series, with the goal to engage in important and difficult topics, to inspire continued commitment to health equity research, and to encourage action, bringing people together from all disciplines and backgrounds. We've had nearly 1,000 virtual attendees in the first four events, with representation from regional and national academic institutions and community-based organizations.

Psychiatry DEI Committee and the Institute for Health Equity Research
Just Talks: Equity and Social Justice in Mental Health



Social (In)Justice and Mental Health
Ruth Shim, MD, MPH


The Office of Gender Equity in Science and Medicine
and
The Institute for Health Equity Research
present

Amplifying Equity



My Career in Gender Affirming Surgery: the Long and Winding Road
featuring
DR. MARCI BOWERS, M.D.

World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) President-elect
Trevor Project Board of Directors



Marci Bowers, M.D. of Burlingame, California, is recognized as a pioneer in the field of Gender Affirming Surgery. She is the first surgeon with transgender history and first woman to perform Gender Affirming Genital surgeries worldwide. Dr. Bowers is a pediatric and gynecologic surgeon with more than 32 years' experience and has performed more than 2,250 primary MTF Gender Affirming Vaginoplasties and more than 3,900 Gender Affirming Surgeries.

MAY 26 - 12:00 PM TO 1:00 PM

REGISTER HERE: [TINYURL.COM/BOWERS2022](https://tinyurl.com/BOWERS2022)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
The Path Towards Gender Equity in Scientific Publications
featuring Dr. Sarah Gender, Editor at Cell
June 22 at 12pm
[TINYURL.COM/EQUITYATCELL](https://tinyurl.com/EQUITYATCELL)

The Institute for Health Equity Research Presents



CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH EQUITY
featuring
Kizzy Charles-Guzman
Executive Director
New York City Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice

October 12
4:30-5:30pm
Zoom

To Register, Scan This QR Code:



Leishan School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Institute for Health Equity Research

The Institute for Health Equity Research presents

Confronting Racism Denial:
Naming Racism and Moving to Action



featuring
Camara P. Jones, MD, MPH, PhD
UCSF Presidential Chair
University of California, San Francisco

6TH APRIL 2022
4.30 PM - 5.30 PM
ZOOM

REGISTER TODAY tinyurl.com/IHERSeminar1

Cosponsored by the Friedman Brain Institute, the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, and the Department of Medical Education

“You have to name a problem in order to get started on the solution. But, if that is all you do, you may forget why you said that thing...Once we start acting, we will not forget why we are acting.”

— **Camara Jones, MD, PhD, MPH**
April 6, 2022

“If you’re not looking for systemically avoidable and unjust social and economic policies and practices, then you’re looking in the wrong direction.”

— **Ruth Shim, MD, MPH**
September 14, 2022

Research Workforce Core

The aim of this core is to transform the composition and focus of Mount Sinai's research workforce to reflect the diversity of our society and ensure that all research is conducted through an equity lens. Some of the work we are most proud of include the following.

Center for Scientific Diversity (CSD)

Led by Emma Benn, PhD, MPH, the Center's primary objective is to increase the research success and equitable advancement of underrepresented faculty researchers in academic medical centers—both investigators and trainees. The team developed an eight-week summer mentored research training initiative for underrepresented undergraduate students from New York City who are interested in pursuing a career as a physician or physician-scientist. In addition, the team leads

the National Institutes of Health FIRST Cohort Cluster Hiring Initiative, which strives to promote and sustain an academic culture of inclusive excellence by recruiting, hiring, and advancing 12 dynamic and promising early-stage investigators in the biomedical sciences, particularly those who are underrepresented in science and medicine and who are committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Exceptional Scholar Awards

As part of our continued commitment to tangibly support diverse scholars, we invited assistant professors from Mount Sinai from diverse backgrounds and with independent research programs to apply for internal

funding, mentoring, and other support to help advance their careers. Each Exceptional Scholar receives up to \$50,000 to support their research. The 2022-2023 recipients of this prestigious award are:



Rita C. Crooms, MD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Neurology, and Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, is improving palliative care for older adults with very aggressive brain tumors.



Homero C. Harari, ScD, MSc
Assistant Professor of Environmental Medicine and Public Health, is developing breath biomarkers to track the impact of cleaning and disinfection products in Latinx domestic cleaners in New York City.



Irene Cal y Mayor Turnbull, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine (Cardiology), Cardiovascular Research Institute, is developing new cellular models to study heart disease.

Healthcare Delivery Science Core

The Healthcare Delivery Science core focuses on embedding equity in all measurements of health care quality across the Mount Sinai Health System to eliminate disparities. Project highlights include:

Advancing Maternal Health Equity: Core Director Dr. Nina Bickell leads IHER's work to remove race- based algorithms used in clinical care that can lead to disparities in care and outcomes. Together with leaders from the Mount Sinai Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, they replaced the race-based VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean) calculator with one that does not use race. Based on this work, Dr. Bickell has been invited to share their experience with other healthcare institutions in a NYC-wide Coalition to End Racism in Clinical Algorithms.

Eliminating bias from physician and nursing notes: Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH, and Lynne Richardson, MD, have partnered with the Quality Leadership Council on the FAIR Documentation initiative, which will eliminate negative descriptors and stigmatizing language from provider notes in electronic health records and educate clinicians on how to use FAIR (Factual, Affirming, Informative and Respectful) language when writing about patients. We will use the latest technology, including artificial intelligence, to identify inappropriate language, and robust engagement of patients to identify the problems and implement solutions.

Community Engagement Core

Working with community stakeholders in all aspects of research is a central component of IHER's charge. Over the past year, we developed and strengthened stakeholder-led initiatives, and amplified the expertise and voice of community partners in research, including developing novel ideas for studies, best ways to recruit and retain diverse individuals as research partners and participants, and strategies to ensure findings inform policies and benefit communities.

Our core's work on preventing COVID-19 and understanding its long-term impacts is critical. We co-lead a grant with other medical center leads and a network of community-based organization across New York City to engage communities in efforts to reduce COVID-19-related health inequities. Together, we develop and disseminate resources to improve vaccination rates and our understanding of COVID-19, host events and trainings for community health workers and navigators, promote inclusion and diversity in COVID-19 clinical trials, and much more.

For example, we launched the Community Immunity video series to encourage intergenerational dialogue around the vaccine in NYC; launched an Instagram account and NYCEAL.org, a website that serves as a resource



repository for community navigators to get up-to-date COVID-19-related information; launched a "Pitch a Tik Tok" encouraging youth to submit campaign ideas for engaging other young people in conversations around COVID-19 on Tik Tok; and funded 10 community organizations as part of its Mini-Grants Program to encourage innovative community engaged projects focused on COVID-19. Dr. Horowitz also chairs the national health equity and community engagement steering committee for RECOVER, the \$1.5 billion program to study and improve long COVID symptoms.

Data Science and Research Core

Our research faculty direct a robust research portfolio and continue to make important contributions to science, including using data to better understand the clinical, neighborhood, and biological contributions to health disparities, and leading efforts to increase participation of diverse individuals in clinical trials. Key initiatives include using data on millions of people to understand the impact of mass incarceration on community health; the association between genes and air pollution in the well-known disparities in chronic kidney disease; and the different impact of COVID-19 in different communities, racial and ethnic groups.

IHER investigators lead more than 40 research grants and are key collaborators in many other studies within and outside of Mount Sinai. We mentor junior faculty and participate actively in research advisory groups and organizations nationally. Among the grants we received over the past year:

- **Sidney Hankerson, MD, MBA**, was funded by the American Foundation to develop multigenerational suicide prevention programs embedded in African American Churches.
- **Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH**, received funding from NIH for the Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities to engage community leaders in efforts to prevent COVID-19.
- **Louisa Holaday, MD**, received funding from the ARCH Network to study how exposure to the criminal justice system affects the health of older community dwelling adults.
- **Utsha Khatri, MD**, received a grant from the Lifespan/Brown Criminal Justice Research Program on Substance Use and HIV to explore associations between incarceration rates in communities and deaths from drug overdose.
- **Lynne Richardson, MD; Nina Bickell, MD; and Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH** were funded by the NIH to conduct a first-of-its-kind research study that will look at structural racism by examining how health care segregated by race and insurance impacts quality and access, delivery of care, and overall health outcomes in New York City.
- **Maria Soledad Sosa, PhD**, received funding from the Susan G. Komen Foundation to harness the immune system to prevent breast cancer metastasis, or spreading.
- **Mark Rea, PhD, Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH, Lynne Richardson, MD, and Mariana Figueiro, PHD**, received NIH funding to develop new non-invasive ways to measure people's oxygen levels, as the current measures overestimate oxygen in people with darker skin pigment, and thus could deprive them of appropriate medical care.
- **Girish Nadkarni, MD, and Carol Horowitz, MD, MPH** were funded by the NIH to include Mount Sinai patients in the All of Us Research Program, a national effort aimed to build the largest most diverse database genetic, health and neighborhood information in the United States for researchers to study health and illness.

MS-RP Alliance for Health Equity Research

Royalty Pharma's remarkable \$20 million gift supports innovative, sustainable initiatives and policies to address systemic inequities in health care and has led to establishing the Mount Sinai-Royalty Pharma Alliance (MS-RP Alliance) for Health Equity Research in collaboration with IHER.

The MS-RP Alliance's important work is already underway, establishing a steering committee led by members of IHER and RP. Together, they have begun setting the Alliance's priorities and building an infrastructure to exchange ideas and propel research collaboration.

“The Mount Sinai-Royalty Pharma Alliance is an innovative undertaking that has the potential to shape the future of health care nationally and internationally. We are excited to partner with Mount Sinai in this comprehensive effort to improve the health and lives of underserved populations.”

– Pablo Legorreta, Royalty Pharma's Founder and Chief Executive Officer



Publications

IHER faculty and staff have published more than 130 peer-reviewed articles in the past year, making important contributions to expose and address health inequities. You can access them all [here](#).

PERSPECTIVE

STRENGTHENING THE MEDICAID REENTRY ACT

Strengthening the Medicaid Reentry Act — Supporting the Health of People Who Are Incarcerated

Utsha G. Khatri, M.D., and Tyler N.A. Winkelman, M.D.

In this perspective piece, published in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), **Utsha Khatri, MD**, and Tyler N.A. Winkelman, MD, discuss the need to strengthen the Medicaid Reentry Act as well as implementation challenges that should be considered and addressed. They also call for continued improvements to health care access along with broader policies redirecting people away from the harmful carceral system.





International Journal of
Environmental Research
and Public Health



Article

Child Disruptions, Remote Learning, and Parent Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Stephanie Deeb ¹, Devin Madden ^{1,2,3}, Timnit Ghebretinsae ^{1,2,3}, Joyce Lin ², Umut Ozbek ², Victoria Mayer ^{1,2,3} and Nita Vangeepuram ^{1,2,3,4,*}

This study exposes pandemic-related disruptions in child routines, pre-existing mental illness, and lower socioeconomic status as major factors contributing to higher risk for harmful mental health outcomes among parents in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also highlights the importance of resources to lessen these harmful effects among vulnerable families.

The Intergenerational Impact of Structural Racism and Cumulative Trauma on Depression

Sidney H. Hankerson, M.D., M.B.A., Nathalie Moise, M.D., M.S., Diane Wilson, M.S., Bernadine Y. Waller, Ph.D., L.M.H.C., Kimberly T. Arnold, Ph.D., M.P.H., Cristiane Duarte, Ph.D., M.P.H., Claudia Lugo-Candelas, Ph.D., Myrna M. Weissman, Ph.D., Milton Wainberg, M.D., Rachel Yehuda, Ph.D., Ruth Shim, M.D., M.P.H.

In this American Journal of Psychiatry publication, **Sidney Hankerson, MD, MBA**, and colleagues assert that structural racism and trauma that has accumulated over time are important factors in causing depression in different generations. They demand action directed towards policies that dismantle structurally racist institutions and practices.

Thank You

We are so proud of all we have accomplished since IHER's launch, and we are immensely grateful to the generous donors who sustain these efforts. Philanthropic support has been integral to our early success, and we are continuously inspired by the robust network of friends and supporters who share our passion for addressing the pervasive inequities present in health care. Thank you for your dedication, and for all that you do to dismantle and eliminate health disparities.



CONTACT US

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General Inquiries outside of
consultation services should be
sent to IHER@mountsinai.org
with "Institute for Health Equity
Research" in the subject line.



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