

Episode: ***Author Interview: “How Should Medical School Admissions Drive Health Care Workforce Diversity?”***

Guest: Rosa Lee, MD

Hosts: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

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TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the Author Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I'm your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative format for accessing the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Dr Rosa Lee, the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Assessment and an Associate Medical Professor at the CUNY School of Medicine at City College of New York in New York City. Dr Lee is also a practicing internist. She's here to discuss her article, [How Should Medical School Admissions Drive Health Care Workforce Diversity?](#), in the December 2021 issue of the Journal, *Health Justice and Diversity in Medical School Admissions*. Dr Lee, thank you so much for being on the podcast today. [music fades out]

DR ROSA LEE: Hi Tim. Thanks for having me. It's great to be here.

HOFF: What is the main ethics point of your article?

LEE: Well, I guess I would say that right now, I think that there is really an acknowledgment of the impact of systemic racism on health care as well as in medical education, and I think that institutions are really trying to right that wrong. And I think that this article is really about the holistic admissions process, which has been used by medical schools to increase diversity in their students and ultimately in the physician workforce. But my article is really sort of pointing at the origins of that policy and really highlighting the fact that while it may certainly try to promote equality and promote diversity, it hasn't actually been as effective in doing so. And that really, we need to rethink our admissions policies in order to truly create a diverse physician workforce as well as to acknowledge and mitigate the systemic racism that's impacted it.

HOFF: Great. Thank you. And what do you see as the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from your article?

LEE: Well, I think that there is a universal acknowledgment that a diverse physician workforce is needed in order to care for a diverse society.

HOFF: Mmhmm.

LEE: And I do think that medical schools are making a concerted effort to create that level of diversity that's needed. I think that what's really important is for schools to recognize that if they really want to make that happen, they have to embed that into the mission of their institution, into the mission of their medical schools. And I believe that only by doing so will they really get to the outcomes that they're hoping to achieve.

HOFF: Hmm. And finally, if you could add a point to your article that you don't feel like you got the chance to fully explore, what would that be?

LEE: Well, I do have a real, I mean, I think my article [chuckles] is a little critical of holistic admissions, but I really do want to give credit to the AAMC and to med schools, which I believe are really making an earnest effort to increase diversity. I think that some of the recent sort of actions that've been taken by the AAMC, particularly in response to COVID and recognizing the impact that COVID-19 has had, the disproportionate impact that it may have had, on certain applicants and the ways to sort of mitigate those impacts, to acknowledge them and really, and address some in the application, in the interviewing, in the admissions process, I think is a real sign of progress and a sincere effort. So, I guess I wish I had a little more time to sort of recognize really the work that is currently being done. [bright theme music returns]

HOFF: Great. Thank you. Dr Lee, I appreciate your contribution to *The Journal* and the podcast this month, and thank you for joining me.

LEE: Thanks!

HOFF: To read the [full article](#) and the rest of the December 2021 issue for free, visit our site, [JournalofEthics.org](http://JournalofEthics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.