

Episode: *Author Interview: “Medical Student-Driven Efforts to Incorporate Segregated Care Education Into Their Curriculum”*

Guest: Ruhee Shah

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[bright theme music]

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 Ruhee Shah, a fourth-year medical student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. She's here to discuss her article, coauthored with Lindsay Clark, Terence M. Hughes, Ashesh Trivedi, and Dr Leona Hess: “*Medical Student-Driven Efforts to Incorporate Segregated Care Education Into Their Curriculum*,” in the January 2023 issue of the Journal, [Segregation in Health Care](#). Ruhee, thank you so much for being on the podcast today. [music fades out]

RUHEE SHAH: Sure. Thanks so much for having me, Tim.

HOFF: So, to begin with, what's the main ethics point of your article?

SHAH: Yeah. So, the main point we're trying to make here is just that medical care segregated by insurance status is sort of de facto segregation by race and is an unjust practice that plays a role in race-based health disparities. I think when we think of this as an ethics issue, it is sort of clear to us that this is just kind of an issue of justice and injustice. And there's a lot of, there's been a lot of conversation in the medicine world about race-based health disparities, and one of the things that plays a role in that is insurance status. And we know in this country, you can have private insurance, you can have Medicaid, you can have Medicare, you can be uninsured, or unable to access insurance, and all of these things change the way that you're able to access health care. And something that is sort of a common practice at academic medical centers is having different medical practices that serve people with different kinds of insurance. And so, this kind of month of the AMA Ethics journal is focused on segregation in academic medical centers, and that's sort of the ethical point to us is just that it is unjust that this exists at all. And our article in particular focuses on what the role of the student is or what the role of medical students is in thinking about this issue and in sort of disseminating awareness about this issue.

HOFF: So, with that in mind, what do you think is the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from your article?

SHAH: Yeah, I think that the most important thing for health professions students to take is that the environments that we train in shape our view of health care and what health care should look like. And so, there's a lot that we're exposed to that can sometimes sort of normalize injustices, but we also have this very unique position as students that we're seeing things with fresh eyes of being able to call out some of these injustices and be a part of ways to change them. And so, part of this is maintaining and spreading awareness of these justice issues that we pick up on in our time in clinical spaces and trying to start conversations with the people educating us, with our attendings, with leadership, about trying to change some of the structural factors surrounding the injustices we see. And so, for our article, we tried to just sort of disseminate some of the tools and presentations that we've used to talk about the issue of segregated care at academic medical centers to make this process of being a student in this position witnessing injustice just a little bit easier for other students that want to get involved in these efforts.

HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to this article that you didn't have the time or space to fully explore, what would that be?

SHAH: Sure. I think it's maybe relatively obvious or simple, but it's just that this article is in particular about sort of the educational, the efforts to integrate discussion about segregated care into educational spaces to raise awareness, but the kind of broader issue that we are talking about is just that we want medical students to advocate for equitable care delivery. And the real goal is not just to raise awareness or increase the amount of education we're doing, but to really work towards eliminating health disparities in all of the ways that we can. And so, just not losing sight of that broader goal of eliminating health disparities in the pursuit of this smaller goal of integrating discussions into first and second-year medical school curricula. [music returns]

HOFF: Ruchi, thank you so much for your time today on the podcast, and thanks to you and your coauthors for your contribution to the Journal this month.

SHAH: Sure. Thank you so much.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of the January 2023 issue for free, visit our site, [JournalofEthics.org](https://www.journalofethics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.