

Editor sidelined after medical journal racism podcast outcry

26 March 2021, by Lindsey Tanner

The top editor at the *Journal of the American Medical Association* has been sidelined amid outcry from Black physicians over a tweet and podcast on structural racism.

"No physician is racist, so how can there be structural racism in health care?" the tweet read in part, promoting a podcast that critics called cringeworthy and appalling.

JAMA removed the podcast earlier this month and its editor-in-chief, Dr. Howard Bauchner, issued an apology. But the independent association committee that oversees the [journal](#) started an investigation and on Thursday placed Bauchner on administrative leave pending the outcome.

"The decision to place the editor-in-chief on administrative leave neither implicates nor exonerates individuals and is standard operating procedure for such investigations," the committee said in a statement.

Dr. Phil Fontanarosa, *JAMA*'s [executive editor](#), will serve as interim editor.

"It's a reasonable first step but it should not be seen as mission accomplished," Dr. Raymond Givens, a Black cardiologist in New York, said Friday. He has been a vocal online critic of a lack of diversity among [editors](#) of [JAMA](#) and other prominent medical journals.

The podcast was billed as a discussion for skeptics and featured two white doctors: a deputy journal editor who expressed discomfort with the word "racism" and a physician who runs a New York City health system.

That deputy later resigned at Bauchner's request and *JAMA* created a new associate editor position for someone with expertise in racism in [health care](#).

The Chicago-based American Medical Association owns and publishes *JAMA* and had called the [podcast](#) wrong and harmful. It has no editorial control over *JAMA*'s content but Bauchner reports to the oversight committee.

Only one of the seven oversight committee members is Black and the editorial boards of *JAMA* and other leading medical journals are mostly white, Givens noted.

"Without diversity, you don't know what you don't know," he said. "With such a non-diverse panel of people, you have all these blind spots that allow these podcasts to go from execution to publication without anybody saying, 'Wait a minute, this is ill-advised.'"

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

APA citation: Editor sidelined after medical journal racism podcast outcry (2021, March 26) retrieved 23 October 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-03-editor-sidelined-medical-journal-racism.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.