

Young professionals speak out on achieving equity in pediatrics

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Young and seasoned scientific investigators share their perspective on achieving equity in academic pediatrics. Their insights appear in the most recent issue of the *International Journal for Equity in Health*. Glenn Flores, the Distinguished Chair in Health Policy Research at the Medica Research Institute, is the lead author of the publication.

It's estimated that racial and ethnic minority children will exceed the number of white children in the U.S. by 2018. But whereas 38 percent of Americans are minorities, only 12 percent of pediatricians, 5 percent of medical-school faculty, and 3 percent of medical-school professors are minorities. And only 5 percent of applications for major research funding from the National Institutes of Health are from African-American, Latino, and American Indian investigators.

The Academic Pediatric Association Research in Academic Pediatrics Initiative on Diversity (RAPID) was initiated in 2012 to address the lack of diversity in the pediatric and biomedical research workforces. RAPID provides research and career development for individuals who are members of underrepresented minority groups, are disabled, or come from a socially, culturally, economically, or educationally disadvantaged background.

As part of the annual RAPID conference, a session is held in which young investigators develop a list of hot topics on career-development issues. These hot topics are posed in the form of six "burning questions" to the RAPID National Advisory Committee, which is comprised of mentoring senior investigators.

The six questions from the 10 young investigators—along with the responses of the senior conference leadership—provide a unique resource and "survival guide" for fostering the career development of young investigators in [academic pediatrics](#) from diverse backgrounds. Topics addressed include:

- Negotiating for protected research time
- Career trajectories as academic institutions move away from tenure-track positions
- How "non-academic" products fit into career development
- Racism and discrimination in academic medicine
- Coping with isolation as a minority faculty member
- How best to mentor the next generation of academic physicians

The full conversation and article are available on the open-access site of the *International Journal for Equity in Health*.

"Achieving health equity requires addressing workforce disparities in our [health](#) research and clinical professions," says Dr. Flores. "The insights offered by those new to the field, as well as those who mentor them, are an important first step in laying the foundation for optimal [career development](#) of young investigators in academic pediatrics from diverse backgrounds."

More information: Glenn Flores et al, Hot topics, urgent priorities, and ensuring success for racial/ethnic minority young investigators in academic pediatrics, *International Journal for Equity in Health* (2016). DOI: [10.1186/s12939-016-0494-6](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-016-0494-6)

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