

COVID-19 Health Disparities, Cardiovascular Disease, and Communities of Color

Wednesday, August 19, 2020
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM CT
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About the Webinar

While health inequities for marginalized communities are not new by any means, the global COVID-19 pandemic has thrust health disparities and systemic health inequities to the forefront of the national health conversation. Recently released data from the non-partisan APM Research Lab indicate that African Americans are dying from COVID-19 at almost three times the rate of white Americans. Moreover, certain parts of the country are seeing Latinx Americans dying at a higher rate. COVID-19 health disparities are driven in large part to highly-prevalent, chronic conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory conditions, and diabetes, that disproportionately impact communities of color. Regardless of race, over eighty-six million Americans live with some form of cardiovascular disease, but African American adults have a fifty percent chance of living with CVD or after-effects of stroke. It is also estimated that cardiovascular disease contributes to nearly forty percent of the life expectancy difference between Blacks and Whites, which amounts to 3.4 years. According to the Kelly Report, African Americans have the highest rate of high blood pressure globally, and Blacks have significantly higher obesity rates than Whites, which increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other health problems. In addition, disparities exist in the quality of care. Patients of color are less likely than non-Hispanic Whites to receive referrals for cardiac rehabilitation, a medically supervised program that has proven to lower mortality rates and prevent second cardiac events. Moreover, According to the CDC, heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, killing 299,578 women in 2017—or about 1 in every 5 female deaths. This webinar brings together leading experts in cardiovascular and neurological care to discuss systemic inequities and social determinants of health that make communities of color more susceptible to cardiovascular disease, stroke, and sequelae from both of these conditions as well as best practices to address these disparities.

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Distinguished Panelist



Dr. Neelum Aggarwal, MD

CHI Board of Directors

Chief Diversity Officer at American Medical Women's Association

Associate Professor, Department of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center

Dr. Neelum T. Aggarwal, MD, is the Chief Diversity Officer at American Medical Women's Association and Associate Professor, Department of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center. She is a cognitive neurologist, clinical trialist and researcher in the field of population health and aging. She is the Senior Neurologist for the federally funded Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center (RADDC) Clinical Core in Chicago; Director of Research at the Rush Heart Center for Women, and an Associate Professor in the Departments of Neurological Sciences and Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center at Rush University Medical Center. A graduate of the Academy of Neurology - Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum, Dr. Aggarwal is a long-standing voice for community based research, clinical trial participation, public health initiatives, both locally and nationally. She has served in numerous leadership roles throughout her career. She is the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA), member of the Governing Council of the American Medical Association- Women's Physician Section, a Fellow of the Institute of Medicine Chicago, and was recently awarded the 2016 Woman in Science award from the American Medical Women's Association. Her role as a Chicago Innovation Mentor (CIM) in addition to serving as the National Chair for the Women in Bio (WIB) Mentoring, Advisors and Peers Committee places her in a unique position to work with a diverse group of colleagues and mentor women in the medical, life sciences and STEM sectors. She completed her medical degree from the Rosalind Franklin University - Chicago Medical School, completed her neurology residency at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, and completed an aging and neurodegenerative disorders fellowship at the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center.

Distinguished Panelist



Dr. Annabelle S. Volgman, MD
Medical Director, Rush Heart Center for Women

Annabelle S. Volgman, M.D., F.A.C.C. is Professor of Medicine and Senior Attending Physician at Rush Medical College and Rush University Medical Center. She is the recipient of the McMullan-Eybel Endowed Chair for Excellence in Clinical Cardiology. She is the Medical Director of the Rush Heart Center for Women. Dr. Volgman received her undergraduate degree with honors from Barnard College, Columbia University, and her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. She is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association. She completed her residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Chicago Hospitals and Clinics and her Cardiology and Clinical Electrophysiology fellowship at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. She has been Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiovascular Disease and Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology.

Dr. Volgman's current research interests include preventive and management strategies of atrial fibrillation, especially antiarrhythmic drugs and anticoagulants for the prevention of stroke in atrial fibrillation. She is an active member of the American Heart Association (AHA) and American College of Cardiology (ACC). She is currently the Education Lead for the Women in Cardiology of the American College of Cardiology. She serves on the Executive Leadership Committees for Women in Cardiology for the AHA and the ACC. Dr. Volgman has written numerous abstracts and articles in multiple topics of women and heart disease, as well as cardiac electrophysiology.

Dr. Volgman is very active in efforts to increase awareness of heart disease in women. She has been a prominent leader of the Go Red for Women movement; received numerous awards from Rush University Medical Center, American Heart Association, Girls in the Game and the Asian American Hall of Fame; been listed in the Marquis Who's Who in fields of education and science; been listed in several lists of Top Doctors; and is featured as a Top Doctor in the January 2008 -2018 issues of Chicago Magazine. She also received the honor of being one of 100 women who make a difference in Today's Chicago Woman Magazine 2011. She is active on social media including Twitter and Facebook to educate the public about heart disease.



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