

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17925/ID.2022.1.1.2>



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Amesika Nyaku is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Newark, NJ, USA, and a physician-scientist. She provides clinical care for people living with HIV or other infectious diseases and substance use disorders. Her research interests lie at the intersection of HIV and substance use disorders. She focuses on, 1) evaluating long-acting therapeutics for HIV and opioid use disorder, 2) the implementation of integrated care models for HIV and substance use disorders to improve health outcomes, and 3) increasing the inclusion and participation of racial/ethnic minorities in clinical trials research. She is also co-director of the Northern New Jersey Medication-Assisted Treatment Center of Excellence that is tasked with assisting the state in expanding access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder through education, novel service delivery and community collaboration.

Dear readers,

I feel so privileged to be selected as the Editor-in-Chief for *touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases*. First, I would like to briefly introduce myself and then share my vision for the journal.

I, like many others, decided to pursue medicine at a young age, after witnessing differential treatment that people receive based on income. I wanted to become a physician and focus my clinical efforts on providing care to those that were too frequently undeserved because of income, geography or social biases and discrimination. During my clinical training at Northwestern University, I participated in clinical research and this experience brought into clear view for me, the transformative potential of research on healthcare delivery and outcomes. I proceeded to complete a fellowship in infectious diseases at Northwestern University, and was awarded a position on the institution's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) funded T32 translational research program. After completing my training, I joined the Division of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Medicine at the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. I am currently an assistant professor and clinical scholar. My clinical work is primarily focused on providing care to people living with, or at risk of, HIV with substance use disorders and my research is focused on evaluating novel pharmacotherapies and optimizing systems of care for the same population. Through my clinical work and research, I took on the role as co-director of the Northern New Jersey Medication-Assisted Treatment Center of Excellence (NNJ-MATrx-COE). As co-director of the NNJ-MATrx-COE, I am responsible for aiding the state in increasing the number and capacity of office-based addiction treatment providers that serve the Medicaid population through training, education and technical assistance.

Infectious diseases are ubiquitous throughout our society and for some groups remain the biggest contributor of morbidity, mortality and reduced quality of life. In this time, when we have suffered through a pandemic and several large-scale outbreaks, infectious diseases have been thrust to the forefront of our collective attention and many are looking for reliable information about these diseases as well as advances in prevention and treatment. Traditionally, the findings from the work of researchers have been shared in academic journals that have been restricted or wholly inaccessible to the population at large. Here at *touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases*, we will continue to lead in our mission to bring accessible and understandable medical content to providers and patients alike. In addition to sharing innovations in clinical practice and serving as a key educational source, I aim to have our journal help to break down the silos between academia and the community by serving as a forum that gives voice to communities that have not regularly participated in the medical and research dissemination that academic journals offer.

touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases is committed to inclusion, diversity, access and equity in the editorial board and its content. I aim for our journal to help confront inequalities in infectious diseases through dissemination and inclusion of the voices of those most impacted by infectious diseases. I am excited about our planned efforts to recruit numerous new members to our editorial board that are a mix of clinical providers, community advocates and individuals with lived experience to contribute their expertise to the journal. In addition to our reviews on clinical and therapeutic innovations, we will be seeking articles focused on infectious diseases that affect populations such as the LGBTQ community, individuals with criminal justice involvement, sex workers and persons who use drugs. We will continue to cover topics related to HIV, TB, COVID-19 and antimicrobial resistance and are keenly interested in covering topics related to neglected tropical diseases and emerging infections.

I would like to reiterate that I am so pleased to take on this role as Editor-in-Chief of *touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases*, and I look forward to continuing to bring accessible, reliable and timely articles that are most relevant to our readership. Your input is very valuable as our journal continues to evolve and I wholeheartedly welcome your suggestions and feedback. □

In solidarity,

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