Understanding Concepts in Diversity and Inclusion: What is Intersectionality? by Anne Maxwell, MD

Intersectionality, coined by legal professor and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, serves as a framework for understanding how interlocking systems of power overlap to affect those marginalized by society. Oxford Dictionary defines intersectionality as “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.” Examples of these factors include: race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, nationality, primary language, disability, caste, and body appearance, among many others.

The implication is that simply addressing these factors in isolation would fail to address the true basis of inequities, instead perpetuating them. For example, a black woman may encounter both racism and misogyny, but would experience racism differently than a black man and misogyny differently than a white woman. Conversations addressing either race or sex are often held in isolation, such that voices of non-white women are marginalized in both. Thus, efforts to dismantle oppressive systems from a single perspective are unable to achieve equality for all. Criticism of the intersectionality framework claim that by focusing on an individual’s subjective experiences, contradictions may arise that would obscure the identification of common causes of oppression. For instance, elevating women’s rights and LGBTQ rights in society could lead to the marginalization of those with deeply held conservative Muslim beliefs, fueling islamophobia. Therefore, intersectionality should be understood within the broader context of social justice. In this way, we can work toward achieving a more diverse and inclusive neurotologic workforce, promoting educational and career opportunities for all our members and better outcomes for our patients.

Kaylin Batey will graduate from University of Kentucky School of Medicine in June 2023 and will be joining the residency of University of Michigan. His sponsor was Dr. Matthew Bush and he was mentored at his outside rotations by Dr. Michael Hoa at Georgetown, Dr. Greg Basura and Dr. Christopher Welch at University of Michigan, Dr. David Haynes at Vanderbilt.

I’m immensely grateful to the American Neurotology Society for supporting my clinical learning experiences in otology/neurology with the Under-Represented in Medicine Travel grant. Supplementary to my home otology/neurotology experiences, my visiting rotations allowed me to realize the breadth and depth of the subspecialty. From observing operative management of an endolymphatic sac tumor for the first time, to expanding my knowledge of vestibular and balance disorders, I witnessed how pleasantly complex, challenging and rewarding this subspecialty can be. The most impactful outcome of this scholarship has been quality of mentorship and sponsorship I have received in otology/neurotology both at my home institution and my visiting rotations. I’m excited for the opportunities that await in residency for continued growth and involvement with ANS. Thank you, Kaylin Batey.

Randall Harley will graduate from University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in June 2023 and will be joining University of Pennsylvania Department of Otolaryngology-HNS. His mentors were Dr. Andy McCall, Dr. Michael Hoa and Dr. Nick Blevins.

As an aspiring Neurotologist, the American Neurotology Society Travel Scholarship positively impacted my career and application to Otolaryngology residency in a myriad of ways. I was able to complete two fascinating away rotations as a result of the scholarship. I gained more exposure within the field of Otolaryngology, connected with Otology/Neurotology mentors, and experienced the nuances of different institutions. In the time since my rotations, however, I have come to realize the most powerful aspect of my travel experiences – connection with other people who are passionate about Otolaryngology. I have continued to see the same faces at scientific conferences and residency interviews. I have become acquainted with other diverse applicants from different institutions. I have had mentors email or call to check in. I have had other medical students reach out for advice moving forward. It is now clear that the experiences I was granted helped me become part of a close-knit community of Otolaryngologists. I am deeply thankful for this experience and I want to sincerely thank the American Neurotology Society and all of its members for this incredible opportunity. Randall Harley.
ANNOUNCING

2023/24 ANS Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Underrepresented in Medicine Otology/Neurotology Travel Scholarship

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee is taking applications for two scholarships for the 2023/24 academic year to assist medical students with travel expenses for external rotations. Through this scholarship, we seek to engage URiM students in research and clinical activities related to the ear, hearing and balance so that they can learn about our field and gain the experience needed to promote a career in otology/neurotology. The successful applicant will receive a $2000 scholarship to support travel and housing expenses for a chosen clinical rotation that requires significant travel from their home institution. A member of the ANS will be identified to provide mentorship to the recipient. Requirements and details are provided on our website or can be obtained by emailing Dr. Moody at moodysa@evms.edu. Members are encouraged to promote the scholarship to eligible students. Applications are requested by June 1, 2023. More information is available at https://www.americanneurotologysociety.com.

Your DI Committee at work

Are you interested in serving on the ANS DI Committee? Apply online at https://www.americanneurotologysociety.com/ans-committees

We hope that our committee will be as diverse in makeup and opinion as is our society, so all members with an interest in contributing to this working committee are encouraged to apply.

Latest in Health Equity in Otology & Neurotology Research

Meinhardt, Gerek; Sharrer, Christine; Perez, Nicole; Downes, Alexandra; Davidowitz, Tess; Schuh, Marissa; Robinson, Lauren; Lustig, Lawrence R.; Bush, Matthew. Reporting of Sociodemographic Data in Cochlear Implant Clinical Trials: A Systematic Review. Otology & Neurotology 44(2):p 99-106, February 2023.