

## What's In This Issue?

There are two other pieces in the What's On Your Mind section. One are some thoughts I wanted to pass on regarding the racial inequities issues that I had heard on the radio. The radio story talked about two "viral" epidemics... the COVID-19 epidemic and the epidemic of slavery. This is such an important problem in our society that I wanted to include it in this issue. Then Dr Bedlack has a nice piece reflecting on Lou Gehrig's battle with ALS and did he in fact have a reversal (? Or plateau) based on an analysis of his baseball metrics. In the New Discoveries/New Stuff section we have two papers by the University of Missouri-Columbia group (my new institution!) led by Dr Govindarajan : one on obstetrics-gynecological complications of neuromuscular disorders and the other on a series of patients presenting with myasthenia gravis that mimicked stroke events. Since COVID-19 is the medical topic of the day, I asked two of our associate facilitators to write a piece for the "Looking Back and Looking Forward at Stuff " section on the neuromuscular complications of COVID-19. Drs Gill Wolfe and Yuebing Li enlisted Dr. Tiffany Pike-Lee to be the lead author on this important review article. In "Clinic Stuff" we have a case from Dr. Mantilla and KUMC group where he trained on a case of COVID-19 and rhabdomyolysis in the setting of statin use as well as a fascinating case , also from the KUMC group, on a case of hereditary amyloidosis with neuropathy that initially resembled CIDP. The "Visual Stuff" contribution is from Drs Pocock and Vu at the University of South Florida where they show dramatic pictures of the effects of CMT on the hands and feet over three generations. For the "Proposed Stuff" section I offered the never funded grant myself and KUMC colleagues submitted to the Patient Centers for Outcomes Research (PCORI) in which we proposed to compare four different drug therapies for excess sialorrhea in patients with ALS. If nothing else, the readers of the journal can see how we put together that PCORI grant. I still think it is a worthy study but I do not think PCORI finds it an interesting enough problem to fund. Finally, for the "Meeting Stuff" section I asked Dr Govindarajan to publish the abstracts the University of Missouri Neurology Departments research day last year. I want to offer this journal as a place to have any neurology department or neuromuscular fellowship program to publish their annual research day abstracts. It's not too late to submit your research day abstracts from the academic year that just ended.

Rick

## COVID-19 and COVID-1619

Letter from the Founding Facilitator

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, Civil War, Civil Rights, COVID-1619, Jim Crow*

I heard an amazing news story recently this week that many of you may have heard as well. Pastor Raphael G. Warnock, PhD from the Ebenezer Baptist church in Atlanta was interviewed. He also happens to be running for the senate in Georgia. This of course is the church where Martin Luther King, Jr was a preacher too. Reverend Warnock said we are dealing with two viral plagues. COVID-19 and COVID-1619. COVID-19 came on our shores around January or February of this year and appeared in the world shortly before that. As our scientist across the world are working on a vaccine for COVID-19, there is a concern that the virus can mutate so that it will be difficult to come up with an effective vaccine, or that the vaccine will have to be altered frequently, such as is done with the influenza flu vaccine. COVID-1619 appeared on our shores in the year 1619 when the first 50 African slaves were brought to the colony of Jamestown in Virginia to serve as slave labor. We have been plagued with the 1619 virus ever since. The American Revolution in the late 1700s did nothing to stamp out this virus. The Civil War in the mid-1800s was the first attempt to "treat" this horrible infection on our land and had some remarkable success. But that success was soon rolled back as COVID-1619 mutated into the Jim Crow south and throughout the nation as we endured government accepted segregation for nearly 100 years. Then the Civil Rights movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr and others made remarkable progress through peaceful protests to change legislation in the USA to give equal rights to all races. Again, for the last 50 years we have seen a dramatic rollback of that success with the next COVID-1619 mutation and the rise of mass incarceration and judicial system injustice toward African Americans and in particular African American men. Now we have the opportunity to once again have a societal therapeutic approach to racial injustice by saying we will not tolerate this form of injustice any longer. The time has at long last come for meaningful, real change. I need to be part of this new movement for social change. Let's attack both COVID-19 and COVID-1619 so they never come back.

Rick