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Contributions to Anti-Racist Science: Introduction to Race, Racism, and the Genetic Structure of Human Populations Special Issue

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Abstract

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Keywords

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Contributions to Anti-Racist Science: Introduction to Race, Racism, and the Genetic Structure of Human Populations Special Issue

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The current editorial team of *Human Biology* continues to be committed to changing the practice and practitioners of science and scholarship by including voices of historically marginalized scholars in the journal. Along with including minority scholars as part of the peer review process, seeking perspectives and submissions from researchers traditionally underrepresented, and devoting special issues to Indigenous science (91.3 and 92.1), we continue the process here by compiling and republishing articles from past *Human Biology* issues by researchers contributing to antiracist science in a special issue titled "Race, Racism, and the Genetic Structure of Human Populations."

The articles by Noah Rosenberg and by Keith L. Hunley & Graciela S. Cabana both examine the structure of human genetic diversity worldwide and demonstrate how this genetic diversity clearly does not fit models that would be consistent with biological race. By presenting human genetic similarities and differences at an introductory level, Rosenberg helps scholars in the humanities and social sciences, as well as the life sciences, understand human genetic variation. Along with models using the serial founder effects process, which fits patterns of genetic data between populations of different regions, Hunley & Cabana investigate evolutionary forces that may explain patterns of genetic diversity in populations in a geographic region. Both Rosenberg and Hunley & Cabana provide overviews of different ways to survey human genetic variation at different scales, demonstrating the complexity of measures of human genetic variation and effectively refuting simple biological race models used in the field in the past.

Also included in this special issue is a response by Charles C. Roseman to Nicholas Wade's 2014 book *A Troublesome Inheritance*. Roseman's article is much more than a book review: his critique of Wade's book is a critical examination of the weak and scattered responses by scholars to racial hereditarian arguments, and he makes a case for studies to investigate how racism structures reproduction and inheritance, to make studies of human genetic variation relevant to the issues of the world today. Shay-Akil McLean picks up where Roseman left off, in his criticism of the critique of racial hereditarian arguments, with a focus on how using isolation-by-distance equilibrium models as arguments against racial hereditarianism erases actions of colonialism and racism that may have influenced human genetic structure in the past. McLean proposes a path forward by combining Du Boisian demography with Darwinian evolutionary biology, in what he calls race/ism, to understand the consequences of racism on genes and health outcomes. In the last article of this special issue,

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Jada Benn Torres & Gabriel A. Torres Colón also provide a path forward by proposing to operationalize race by emphasizing racial experience as an embodied experience that is as real and valid as biological variation. By placing racial experience and human biological diversity in the same ontological space, studies that use this approach can more effectively advance antiracist research, teachings, and policies.

Along with these five articles, compiled into one issue, we include letters written in 2020 by members of the American Association of Anthropological Genetics (AAAG) and the American Association of Physical Anthropology (AAPA). These open letters advocate taking immediate action to commit to and advocate for change by dismantling structural racism and building more equitable systems within their scientific disciplines.