



Who Wants to Be a Millionaire in Vascular Disparities (04-29-2024)
Presented by Dr Awad Javaid, MD

Participating in the ACC 2024 “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire in Vascular Disparities” competition was an amazing experience for me! I am a third-year cardiovascular medicine fellow at The Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. I’m beginning my interventional cardiology fellowship at The Ohio State University in July 2024. I have developed an interest in peripheral artery disease (PAD) over time because I believe it has been historically overshadowed by coronary and myocardial disease. I always try to remind myself that I am a cardiovascular fellow, not a cardiology fellow. One-year mortality for critical limb ischemia is up to 25% and five-year mortality is as high as 60%¹. Despite these sobering statistics, there are fewer clinical trials in this patient population compared to coronary and heart failure trials. Additionally, certain demographic groups are significantly underrepresented in studies of PAD and many of these groups do not receive equitable care. I have always been strongly dedicated to improving human rights, and my main goal as a physician has been to impart health, equity, and respect to all individuals I encounter. I am committed to increasing awareness regarding how disparities and disproportionalities manifest in access, treatment, and outcomes within our health care system. Throughout my medical training, my mentors Drs. Aditi Singh, Chowdhury Ahsan, and Cezar Iliescu have reinforced the paramount significance of providing the best care possible to all patients regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

For these reasons, I have a natural interest in PAD and related disparities, so I was thrilled to participate in “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire in Vascular Disparities” when I was offered the opportunity by my state chapter leadership. I prepared for the competition by reading PAD society guidelines and searching PubMed for journal articles on PAD disparities in prominent cardiovascular journals. The experience on stage was somewhat nerve-wracking, especially having to stand in the middle of the stage under the spotlight. Before I went to the microphone, I said a short prayer and told myself to stay calm and confident and enjoy the process. Dr. Mitchell Weinberg did a great job in maintaining an easygoing atmosphere as the host. Overall, the experience was quite memorable. I remember watching so many episodes of “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” as a child, so participating in a similar platform as a fellow was remarkable. It was an honor to win the competition. However, my main goal in participating was to be able to learn and highlight disparities in PAD.

I encourage all cardiology fellows in training to reach out to leaders in their state chapters, such as their ACC governors, and participate in ACC events as much as possible. Networking through ACC events has been very beneficial for me. I have been introduced to many colleagues whom I now call friends. The ACC has helped me advance professionally and learn much about cardiovascular medicine. I also urge all fellows in training to recognize that there are still significant disparities in PAD outcomes and in medicine as a whole, and that we all have implicit biases in our daily medical care. We must recognize this and do our best to deliver excellent and equitable care for all our patients. I hope all fellows can get involved in their local ACC chapter and future ACC events.

References

1. Davies, M.G., 2012. Critical limb ischemia: epidemiology. *Methodist DeBakey cardiovascular journal*, 8(4), p.10.