



# HEARTBEAT

A PUBLICATION OF THE JACKSON HEART STUDY ♥ FALL/WINTER 2020

## JHS Exam Center Visit 4 Updates

First, we would like to thank you for your continued participation in the Jackson Heart Study (JHS). Your participation is an invaluable asset to the study of cardiovascular disease in African Americans. We continually think of you and your families and hope that you are all well during this time.

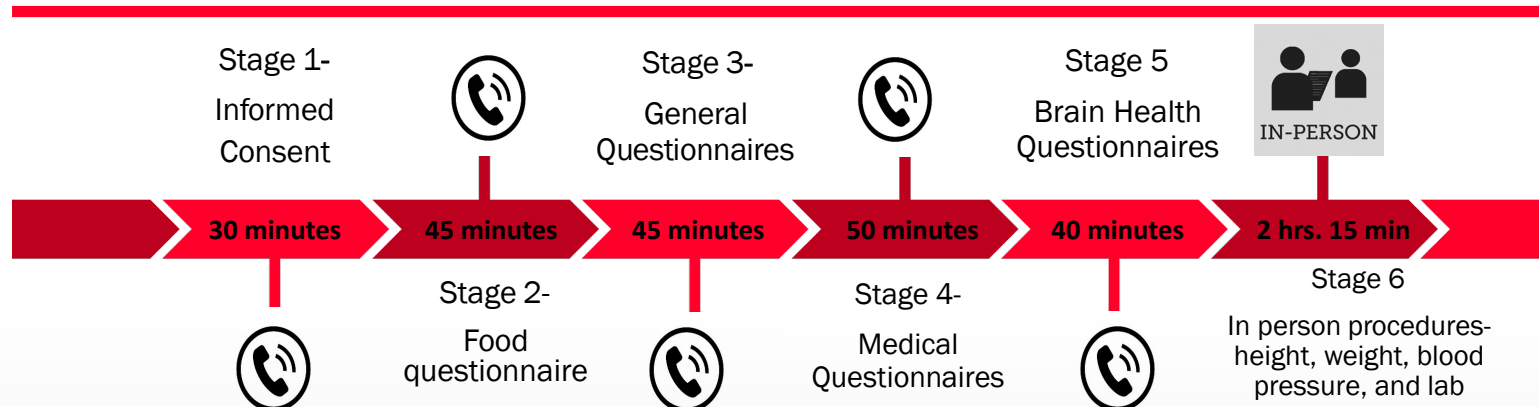
We know that the four seasons bring about changes. We now find ourselves in a fifth season: COVID-19. No one knows how long this season will last, and many changes have become necessary because of it. At the JHS, your safety and the safety of our staff are of utmost concern. We continue to monitor the outbreak in the Jackson area. After carefully considering the guidance of local health officials, we will delay the in-person procedures for Exam 4 until local disease transmission has decreased.

JHS Exam 4 will be conducted differently than prior exams. Instead of one face-to-face visit, the exam will occur in stages, mostly through telephone. We plan to start the in-person visit in Spring/Summer 2021. We will keep you informed of any changes to Exam 4.

The graphic below provides an overview of the stages. We have and will continue to mail out information packets as your scheduled visit draws closer. The packets will contain copies of the informed consent, forms for contact information updates and reimbursement, telephone interview instructions, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to return the completed forms. A JHS staff person will call you sometime after the packet is mailed to you.

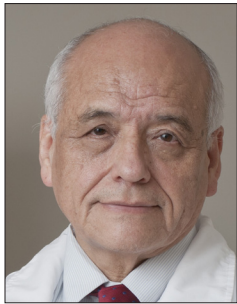
**Please continue to stay safe by practicing social distancing, frequent handwashing and wearing facemasks outside your home.**

## Exam 4 is HERE!



\*Stages 1-5 will be conducted via telephone and stage 6 will require you to visit the JHS Exam Center. If you have questions about any stage of the exam, please call us at 601-815-5050.

## Director's Corner



Dr. Adolfo Correa,  
Director, Jackson Heart Study

Thank you for being a loyal Jackson Heart Study (JHS) participant!

I hope you and your family are safe and well in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. 2020 was a success despite dealing with the pandemic.

The JHS celebrated 20 years and this would not have been possible without your commitment as a JHS participant.

I am pleased to share with you that the Jackson Heart Study (JHS) is continuing to make excellent progress. With your strong support and collaboration, our Annual Follow-Up team has continued to make excellent progress with annual follow-up interviews and assessments of the health status of our participants. We have continued to receive and process an increasing number of manuscript proposals, ancillary study proposals, and manuscripts for publication, underscoring the high value of the study as a resource for the scientific community. From January 2020 to August 2020, there were over 30 scientific papers published based on the JHS data, providing new findings on sleep characteristics, cigarette smoking, diet, social factors, and cardiovascular health. One of the lay summaries of such findings is included on page 6. Again, we truly appreciate each of you for your commitment to the study.

Thank you for your support.

— Dr. Adolfo Correa, Director  
Jackson Heart Study

*As of December 31, 2020, Dr. Correa retired from his role as the JHS Director. A search for a new director is still in progress and Dr. Mario Sims is currently serving as the Interim Director. The JHS Team will inform you once a new director has been selected.*

## Highlights of the 2020 Virtual Conference



JHS 20th Anniversary Conference Planning Committee

2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the Jackson Heart Study. We held a virtual conference, “Every Heartbeat Matters: Changing the Future of Heart Health,” sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). Due to COVID-19, we revised the format of the conference from a two-day conference and gala to a virtual scientific conference and webinar held September 17, 2020.

The conference addressed cardiovascular disease research that considers clinical, behavioral and psychosocial factors; diversifying the workforce by training new heart, lung, blood and sleep researchers; and translating and disseminating JHS findings into the community.

Dr. Mario Sims, chief science officer and planning committee chair, provided a welcome message and conference overview. Dr. Gary Gibbons, director of the NHLBI, gave opening remarks. Dr. Adolfo Correa, director and principal investigator, gave a “state of the study” address. Dr. Herman Taylor, past director and PI, also gave remarks. Dr. Eliseo Perez-Stable, director of the NIMHD, presented on approaches to studying cardiovascular disease disparities. Training and Education Center scholars presented their work. A special session focused on COVID-19 included presentations by Dr. Thomas Dobbs, state health officer; Dr. Victor Sutton, PI of the Community Engagement Center (CEC); and Dr. Correa. Dr. Frances Henderson, former deputy director, presented the JHS 20th Anniversary Scientific Supplement published by the Mississippi State Medical Association. The final session included updates from the Scientific Working Groups.

The virtual conference was a success. From all of us at the JHS, thank you to our planning committee, presenters, attendees, participants, scientific collaborators, community partners and funders.

## Get to know the Annual Follow-up Interviewer: Joyce Sartin



Joyce Sartin

### How long have you worked as a Jackson Heart Study AFU Interviewer?

I have worked for the JHS since March 2020. I started this role in the middle of the pandemic, which presented some challenges.

### Please tell us the importance of the AFU interviewer.

The role of the interviewer is essential to the retention in the study and the data collection. One key quality of an interviewer is to have empathy. As an interviewer you will deal with participants who sometimes are feeling ill when you call them, some may be grieving the loss of a loved one, depression, loneliness, and being able to survive in the midst of the pandemic. Empathy is one quality you need as you listen to participants express themselves. Additionally, building rapport with participants is important and one way to achieve this is by personalizing the

conversation, such as calling participants by their name throughout the interview. Participants may be dealing with a lot, but you have to be respectful of their time and the things they may be dealing with as you conduct the interview. The interviewer has to utilize active listening skills and be able to respectfully re-direct participants, if they deviate from what the interview should be about. Another quality of the interviewer is to have patience like Job. You may not be able to finish an interview within the allotted time with some of the participants, as they are dealing with real life issues that they want to express.

### Describe the relationship between the interviewer and the participant. Share what it means to you to talk with participants.

The relationship between the interviewer and the participant can be serious or playful. Even though each participant is different, the relationship between the participant and the interviewer should be built on trust and mutual respect. The relationship between the interviewer and participant can blossom as they grow accustomed to each other. The interviewer should convey to the participant their value to the study. In my brief time as an interviewer, I have learned that some participants look forward to the phone call, as sometimes they need someone to talk to and are happy to provide the information that the JHS needs. —

## Community Health Advisors Network (CHAN) Update

The Pearl Community Health Advisors Network, the City of Pearl Mayor's Health Council, Mt. Carmel Ministries and Sweet Rest Church of Christ Holiness collaborated to conduct a free community mask giveaway. Held on July 16, 2020, the giveaway also included bottles of hand sanitizer and a fact sheet on Chronic Disease and COVID-19. Approximately 200 community members participated in the event.

Community Engagement Center Outreach Specialists Marty Fortenberry and Grace Washington, Pearl CHAN and Mayoral Health Council Coordinator Myron Jackson, and church members Helen Jackson, Evelyn Dixon and Kimberly Stewart coordinated the event. —





## Undergraduate Training Center - Tougaloo College

The Undergraduate Training and Education Center and the Brown University School of Public Health held a virtual town hall on the impact of COVID-19 on the African-American community on Aug. 10, 2020. Participants included Tougaloo students, students from other Jackson Heart Study training centers,



Thomas

health professionals, faculty and members of the public. The virtual event was hosted by Jackson Heart Study Scholars Levell Williams, senior mass communications major, and Cedonia Thomas, senior biology major. The panel included Dr. Thomas Dobbs, state health officer; Dr. Paul Byers, state epidemiologist; Dr. Marshala Lee, former Jackson Heart Study Scholar and Di-

rector of the Harrington Value Institute Community Partnership Fund at ChristianaCare; and Dr. Ashish Jha, former director of the Global Health Harvard Institute and new dean of the Brown University School of Public Health. Tougaloo College President Dr. Carmen Walters opened the town hall.

The hosts initiated the conversation by getting an update on the state of COVID-19 nationally and in Mississippi. Jha discussed how the virus was not taken seriously at the start of the pandemic. In terms of the disparate impact the virus has had in the African American community and minority populations, he said this may be due to the inequalities in the healthcare system. He said that, "It is important to look at this pandemic with an equality lens as well as a pandemic lens." Dobbs said that in Mississippi, the initial concerns related to COVID-19 transmission were focused on outside travelers. Now, efforts are focused on the disproportionately affected African American, Hispanic and Native American communities. Dobbs also mentioned that Mississippi is trying to keep hospital rates stabilized.



Williams

The conversation was informative, timely and engaged the participants. There were several topics fueled by excellent questions from the hosts and audience. Discussions included COVID-19 misinformation, COVID-19's impact on African American people with pre-existing conditions and the reopening of Mississippi schools. Lee talked about how Historically Black Colleges and Universities could play an important role in the crisis by advocating for their communities. The lively discussion ended with panelists urging participants to stay the course and trust science from reliable sources, not social media. —

## Changing the Future

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Between April 14th and April 28th, 6,821 Mississippians contributed to the COVID-19 survey. Responses included residents of every county in Mississippi. Please keep in mind that this survey was administered early on in this pandemic. Below is a brief summary of the information that was collected.

90.1% of Mississippians believe COVID-19 is a serious threat

35.3% of Mississippians are confident the medical and healthcare facilities of their town can handle the COVID-19 outbreak

• Only 23.5% for Black Mississippians

20.4% of Mississippians believe there is enough COVID-19 testing being done in their communities

• 13.4% for Black Mississippians

89.2% of Mississippians have moderate to strong trust in medical advice from the State Health Officer / MSDH

85.8% of Mississippians have altered their behaviors based on the influence of the State Health Officer / MSDH

## Graduate Training and Education Centers -

### Jackson State University

The Graduate Training and Education Center recently concluded its orientation and research camp for the seventh cohort of the Daniel Hale Williams Scholars Program. Scholars were selected from Mississippi universities.



**Ra'Chaud Brown, B.A.**  
Tougaloo College  
M.P.H. Student, Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
**Jackson State University**



**Ariel Wilson, B.A.**  
University of Mississippi  
Medical Student  
**University of Mississippi Medical Center**



**Gabriel Gardner, B.S.**  
Alcorn State University  
M.P.H. Student, Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
**Jackson State University**



**Brittany Sanders, M.P.H.**  
Jackson State University  
Dr.P.H. Student, Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
**Jackson State University**



**Jazoria Morris, B.S.**  
M.S. Student, Environmental Health  
**Mississippi Valley State University**



**Marjada Tucker, B.A.**  
Rice University  
Medical Student  
**University of Mississippi Medical Center**



**Raegan Bishop, B.A.**  
M.P.H. Student  
**University of Southern Mississippi**



**Michael-Ryan Lowe, B.S.**  
Mississippi State University  
M.S. Student, Biological Sciences  
**Jackson State University**

### University of Mississippi Medical Center



Robert Booker is a doctoral student in Exercise Science at Mississippi State University. He earned B.S and M.S. degrees from Missouri State University. Booker is a certified exercise physiologist with the American College of Sports Medicine and a member of the first cohort of Robert Smith, M.D. Scholars.

Booker's research interests include sedentary behavior, cardiovascular health, epidemiology and technology. He seeks to understand the links between these areas to develop creative interventions to increase physical activity among people who are largely inactive.

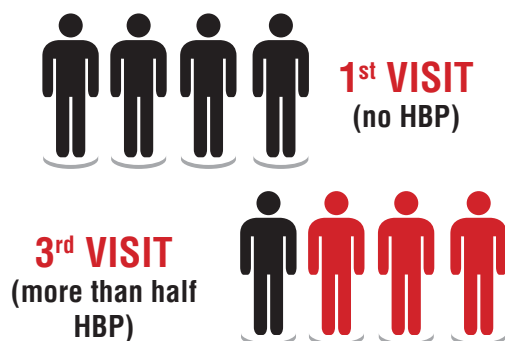
He leads a JHS project that will contribute to our understanding the pathways linking physical inactivity to cardiometabolic disease. His doctoral project is on the use of immersive, virtual-reality video games to increase physical activity. The popularity and accessibility of these games could make them an effective tool across ages and abilities.

Booker is an emerging Native American scholar who seeks to become an independent scientist. His goal is to be a leader in translational research that specifies pathways between sedentary behaviors and metabolic syndrome. He plans to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship and acquire a graduate degree in biostatistics. His future is bright and we look forward to contributing to his career development.

## Discrimination and risk of getting high blood pressure

### Purpose of the study

African Americans have higher rates of high blood pressure (or hypertension) compared to other racial or ethnic groups in the United States. One reason for this could be racial discrimination or unfair treatment. Using the Jackson Heart Study (JHS), researchers looked at how reports of discrimination were related to the chance of getting high blood pressure between visit 1 (2000-2004) and visit 3 (2008-2013) among African Americans.



More than half of  
**African Americans (52%)**  
who did not have high blood  
pressure at the first visit  
had it by the third visit.

Some people reported that **high levels of stress**  
resulted from **discrimination over their lifetime.**

This stress was also related to  
**a greater chance of getting high blood pressure.**

**RACISM** > **RACISM**  
greater chance of HBP

**Participants** who reported a lot  
(compared to a little) of  
**discrimination during their lifetime**  
had a greater chance of getting **high blood**  
**pressure** between visit 1 and visit 3.

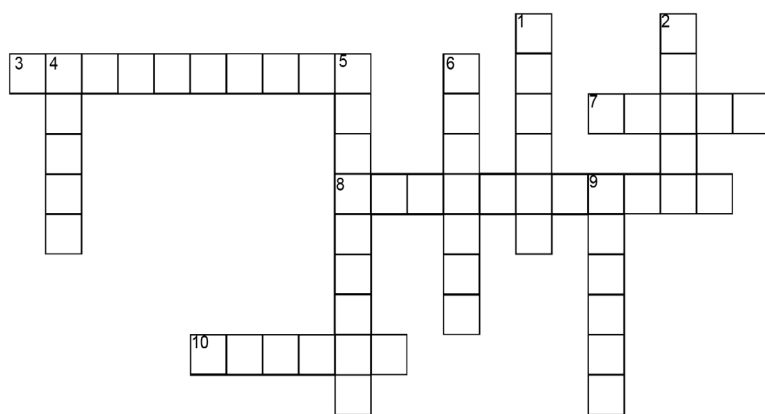


### Take away message

Racial discrimination that occurs over the lifetime of many African Americans may increase their chance of getting high blood pressure over time. Healthcare providers (including doctors, nurses and public health workers) could monitor how a stressor such as discrimination may affect their patients' blood pressure. Providers should connect their patients to resources that reduce stress and promote heart health. Public policies that address discrimination may improve the health of African Americans.

Citation: Forde AT, Sims M, Muntner P, Lewis T, Onwuka A, Moore K, Diez Roux AV. Discrimination and Hypertension Risk Among African Americans in the Jackson Heart Study. Hypertension. 2020;76(3):715-723. doi:10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.119.14492. PMID: 32605388.

# Healthy Heart Puzzle



Directions: solve this crossword puzzle and learn to keep your heart healthy for life!

## Across

3. Eat lots of fruits and \_\_\_\_\_ to get many of the nutrients you need for good health.
7. Staying at a healthy weight, avoiding excess sodium, and getting enough regular exercise can help keep your \_\_\_\_\_ pressure right where it needs to be.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ fat is good for your heart, as long as you don't eat too much of it. It's in things like olive oil and fish.
10. Blood carries \_\_\_\_\_ to the heart.

## Down

1. When fat, cholesterol, and other things build up in your bloodstream, they can form \_\_\_\_\_, which sticks to your artery walls and makes it harder for blood to move around.
2. When in doubt, choose \_\_\_\_\_ grains, which are great sources of heart-healthy fiber.
4. When you eat, choose foods that are full of nutrients, not \_\_\_\_\_ calories.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ fat is not good for your heart. You can find this kind of fat in full-fat dairy and fatty meats.
6. According to the American Heart Association, "Using ANY \_\_\_\_\_ product damages nearly EVERY organ in your body and can cause heart disease and cancer." Even "smokeless" versions cause damage.
9. Staying \_\_\_\_\_ every day with fun exercises will help keep your heart in tip-top shape.

Solutions: 1. plaque, 2. whole, 3. vegetables, 4. empty, 5. saturated, 6. tobacco, 7. blood, 8. unsaturated, 9. active, 10. oxygen

## NHLBI Announcement

The Jackson Heart Study (JHS) bids farewell and happy adventures to longtime NHLBI Project Director, Ms.



Nelson

Cheryl Nelson. After 30 years of federal service – of which, more than 20 were devoted to the JHS, Cheryl has retired. Many of you have met and engaged with Cheryl over the years and we invite you in sharing JHS best wishes for her as she enters retirement. Remember, Cheryl did not just work for JHS, she has deep family roots in Mississippi and served with dedication and commitment to the Jackson and the

Mississippi region. We are also excited to welcome Dr.



Smith

Sharon Smith to the Jackson Heart Study as the new NHLBI Program Director. Dr. Smith is an Epidemiologist whose career has focused on health disparities and social determinants of health. Dr. Smith is no stranger to the south having graduated from North Carolina State University before obtaining her master's degree

at North Carolina Central University and subsequently her PhD in Epidemiology from the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina.

## Upcoming Events:

UMMC EversCare is committed to fighting hunger and building communities. As part of this commitment, EversCare has organized monthly food distribution events to serve the community. JHS participants are invited to take part in the food distribution events. For more information, call 601-815-3535.

**Dates:** February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21

**Time:** From 10am to 1pm- (Mobile/Car distribution)

**Location:** 2548 Livingston Road, Ste 1, Jackson, MS 39213





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Jackson, MS 39216-4505

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Web address: [www.jacksonheartstudy.org](http://www.jacksonheartstudy.org)



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## Mental Health

Many people experience severe mental distress at some point in their lives. It may last only a few days or weeks; it may be there most or all the time. It can make you feel very alone. The signs vary. You could feel:

- **Overwhelmed or confused**
- **Frightened or angry**
- **Worthless or depressed**
- **Others do not understand you**
- **Everyone is against you**
- **You cannot take care of yourself**
- **You are going to hurt yourself or someone else**

Get help. Ignoring the signs or denying there is a problem can make matters worse.

For serious mental illness, try to find a mental health specialist. Public mental health programs offer some services and referrals, but treatment is not always easy to get. Family and friends may also be able to help. Additionally, self-help groups, counselors and clergy offer important kinds of guidance and support.

### Where to find local professional help:

#### Brentwood Behavioral Healthcare:

(601) 936-2024 (Inpatient) (601) 936-7873 (Outpatient)

**Hinds Behavioral Health:** (601) 321-2400 (Outpatient)

**Merit Health Behavioral Health:** 601-376-2600 (Inpatient)

**Region 8 Mental Health:** (601) 824-0342 (Outpatient)

**St. Dominic Behavioral Health:** (601) 200-3090 (Inpatient)

**MS State Hospital:** (601) 351-8000 (Inpatient)

**The Jackson Heart Study Heartbeat Newsletter is published semi-annually (spring and fall) by the Jackson Heart Study Newsletter Team.**

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