Each year, the *Heart* editorial team selects the most meritorious research paper to receive the Heart Best Research Paper Award. Primary considerations are the relevance of the clinical question addressed by the research, the quality of the research study design and data presentation, and the interest generated by the paper among other researchers, clinical cardiologists and the general public.

This year, we are pleased to announce the winner and two finalists for the 2020 *Heart* Best Paper Research Award, highlighting the first author of each paper and sincerely congratulating the entire research team on their outstanding research contribution (table 1).

**WINNER**

*Ralph K. Akyea MPH, MBChB* (figure 1) is a second-year doctoral student and part-time research associate with the Primary Care Stratified Medicine Research Group, Division of Primary Care, University of Nottingham, UK. He received his medical degree from the University of Ghana Medical School and earned his master’s degree in public health from the University of Nottingham. Dr Akyea’s primary research focuses on population health—understanding disease heterogeneity and identifying unique patient groups, with the aim of helping to tailor treatment and management strategies. He is looking forward to a postdoctoral research fellowship in population health after his doctoral studies, with the aim to be a world-class epidemiologist.

Dr Akyea summarises his study as follows. The two main findings of this study are that

- Within 24 months of initiating statins, 51.2% of the patients did not achieve the optimal response recommended by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence clinical guidelines for lipid management, that is, a 40% reduction in non-HDL cholesterol.
- During the follow-up period of about 6.2 years, the risk of first cardiovascular disease event was significantly reduced in patients who did achieve an optimal response.

The clinical implication of this study is that both patients and clinicians have a role to play as suboptimal response to statin therapy may be a result of a number of factors, including genetic differences, non-adherence to prescribed statins or, in some cases, being prescribed low-potency statins.Clinicians need to ensure effective implementation of guidelines and familiarise ourselves with the goal of treatment. Continuous regular monitoring of response will also help identify early patients not meeting the set treatment goal. Patients need to be educated on the scientific evidence as it relates to the benefits of statins, and other lipid-lowering therapies should be intensified. Patients should be encouraged to adhere to prescribed medications, including statins. Finally, patients should also be encouraged to openly discuss any issues related with their treatment with healthcare professionals.

**FINALISTS**

*Weijian Huang, MD* (figure 2) is director of the Cardiovascular Medicine Department at The First Affiliated Hospital of Wenzhou Medical University, Wenzhou, China. His research focuses on exploring more physiological pacing strategies, such as His bundle pacing (HBP) and left bundle branch pacing. The key finding of his study was that left bundle branch block (LBBB) that met the Strauss criteria could be acutely corrected by HBP in 97% of patients. HBP resulted in significant improvements in clinical function and left ventricular systolic performance during long-term (median 37 months) follow-up. These findings suggest that HBP has the potential to be the most physiological strategy for cardiac resynchronisation therapy in the future and that pacing near or distal to the site of block is associated with a low and stable LBBB correction threshold.

*Ralph Maddison, PhD* (figure 3) is a professor of digital health for lifestyle and disease management at the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. His research is centred on the development and evaluation of digital interventions for the prevention and management of chronic diseases. His work is motivated by the need to improve access and delivery...
of support for people living with chronic disease. In this study, a non-inferiority randomised clinical trial showed that remotely monitored telerehabilitation (REMOTE-CR) was comparable with in-person exercise cardiac rehabilitation, as measured by maximal oxygen uptake, modifiable cardiovascular risk factors, exercise adherence and other parameters. In addition, REMOTE-CR telerehabilitation was considerably less expensive than the traditionally delivered in-person rehabilitation approaches. Advantages of telemedicine are especially important now in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this study supports this approach for ensuring all outpatients have access to effective exercise cardiac rehabilitation.

Join me in congratulating the Best Research Paper winner and finalists for their excellent contributions to clinical cardiology!

Table 1  Heart best research paper Award winner and Finalists 2020

| Winner                                                                 | Suboptimal cholesterol response to initiation of statins and future risk of cardiovascular disease  | Heart Jul 2019, 105 (13) 975–981; DOI: 10.1136/heartjnl-2018–314253 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ralph Kwame Akyea, Joe Kai, Nadeem Qureshi, Barbara Iyen, Stephen F Weng |                                                                                                  |                                                                         |
| Finalists                                                             | Long-term outcomes of His bundle pacing in patients with heart failure with left bundle branch block | Heart Jan 2019, 105 (2) 137–143; DOI: 10.1136/heartjnl-2018–313415          |
| Weijian Huang, Lan Su, Shengjie Wu, Lei Xu, Fangyi Xiao, Xiaohong Zhou, Guangyuan Miao, Pugazhendhi Vijayaraman, Kenneth A Ellenbogen |                                                                                                  |                                                                         |
| Ralph Maddison, Jonathan Charles Rawstorn, Ralph A H Stewart, Jocelyne Benatar, Robyn Whittaker, Anna Rolleston, Yannan Jiang, Lan Gao, Marj Moodie, Ian Warren, Andrew Meads, Nicholas Gant | Effects and costs of real-time cardiac telerehabilitation: randomised controlled non-inferiority trial | Heart Jan 2019, 105 (2) 122–129; DOI: 10.1136/heartjnl-2018–313189 |

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Patient consent for publication  Not required.

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