ANALYSIS OF THE HEMATOLOGY HEALTH EQUITY LITERATURE: TRENDS BY TOPIC & DISPARITY, ACROSS JOURNALS, & OVER TIME

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INTRODUCTION

Health equity has increasingly become a priority in medicine. Through an initiative of the ASH Health Equity Task Force, we published the ASH Health Equity Compendium which described health equity publications in *Blood* journals. Here, we present the results of a scoping review of hematology health equity publications in the leading hematology journals.

ASH Health Equity Compendium

AIMS

To characterize published hematology health equity articles, highlight research gaps that would benefit from increased attention/resources, and inspire efforts to characterize/ address disparities in hematology.

RESULTS

- Our search yielded 5,494 articles. 1,009 underwent full-text screening with 602 included in the review.
- A total of 2072 abstracts were assessed for eligibility, of which 153 were included in the review.
- **Table 1** notes the journals with the greatest number or highest proportion of health equity articles

Journal	Number of Articles	Proportion of Articles
Pediatric Blood & Cancer	77	1.92%
Blood Advances	65	1.47%
Transfusion	52	1.63%
Clinical Lymphoma, Myeloma, & Leukemia	38	2.84%
Lancet Hematology	38	3.34%
Transplantation & Cellular Therapy	32	3.13%
Critical Reviews in Oncology and Hematology	9	2.19%
Blood Cancer Journal	20	2.14%

Table 1. Journals with the Highest Number or Proportion of Hematology HE Articles between 2018-2024.

- The most common **study topic** among hematology health equity publications was disease phenotype/ outcome differences by patient demographics (**Fig. 1**).
- Most articles were about patients with 64 (11%) about blood/stem cell donors & 26 (4%) the workforce. 132 (22%) had a pediatric/AYA focus. 262 (44%) were retrospective studies, with 116 (19%) prospective/trials & 23 studying basic science correlates of disparities.

Figure 3. Study topics addressed in hematology health equity articles.

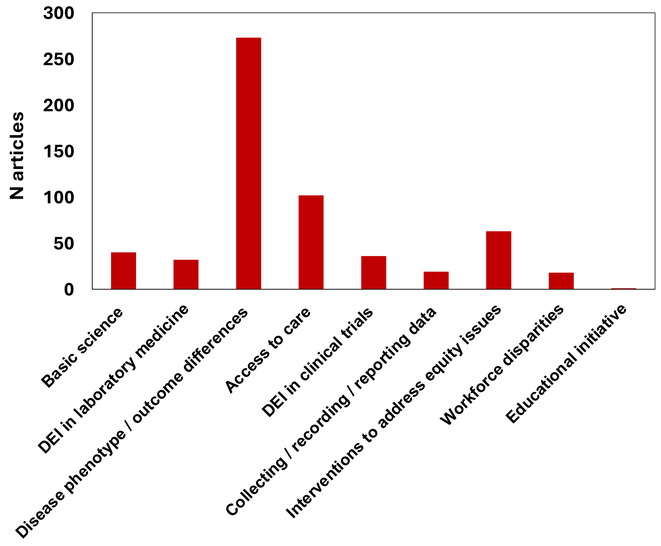
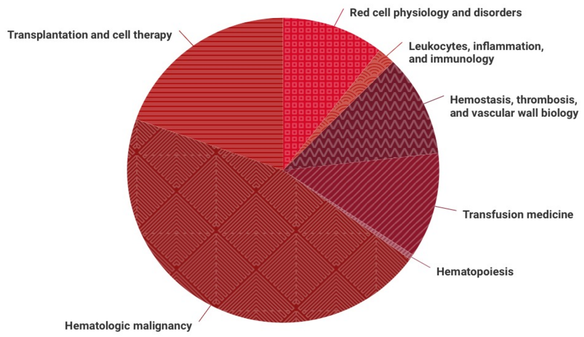
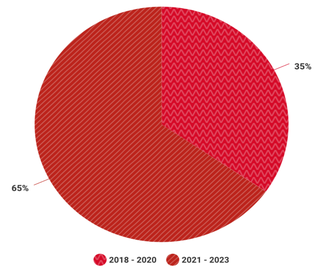


Figure 4. Disease Groups Addressed in Hematology Health Equity Articles



- Of 562 disease-related articles (**Fig. 2**), most examined hematologic malignancies/transplant/cell therapy (372, 66%). Only one third examined classical hematology.
- Most articles (342/602, 57%) focused on racial/ethnic disparities, with 239 (40%) on socioeconomics; 87 (14%) sex/parity; 65 (11%) geographic; 54 (9%) age; and 46 (8%) sexual/gender minorities (22 on transgender people). Less than a third (179/602, 30%) considered intersectionality across disparities.
- Only 12 focused on Indigenous peoples, 5 disability, 8 religion, 9 immigration and 2 incarceration.
- Only 8 noted partnerships with populations impacted.

Figure 5. Hematology Health Equity Articles Over Time



- Hematology health equity articles increased over time (**Fig. 3**).
- Both the number and proportion of equity-focused articles increased over time—with twice as many published in the later period (2021–2023, n=356) compared to the earlier period (2018–2020, n=189; $p < 0.001$), and a higher proportion observed (0.85% vs. 1.4%, $p < 0.001$)

METHODS

- We utilized PRISMA-P guidelines to develop a scoping review protocol.
- Eligible journals for this review had an impact factor > 9.2, were listed in Clarivate's Journal Citation Reports 1st quartile, and/or were a major hematology/oncology society's official journal.
- Eligible articles focused on HE in hematology & published in: one of **22 hematology journals** between **1/1/2018 – 3/13/2024** OR in one of **46 oncology/medicine/pediatrics journals** between **1/1/2018 –4/4/2024.**
- A research library crafted a search to retrieve all articles with ≥ 1 HE subject heading or ≥ 1 title/abstract HE keyword from a predefined list.
- Abstracts published in the conference proceedings of the most recent 2 meetings of 10 adult/pediatric hematology/oncology societies from 5/1/2022 – 4/30/2024 were included in a separate analysis.

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of included articles examining health equity in hematology

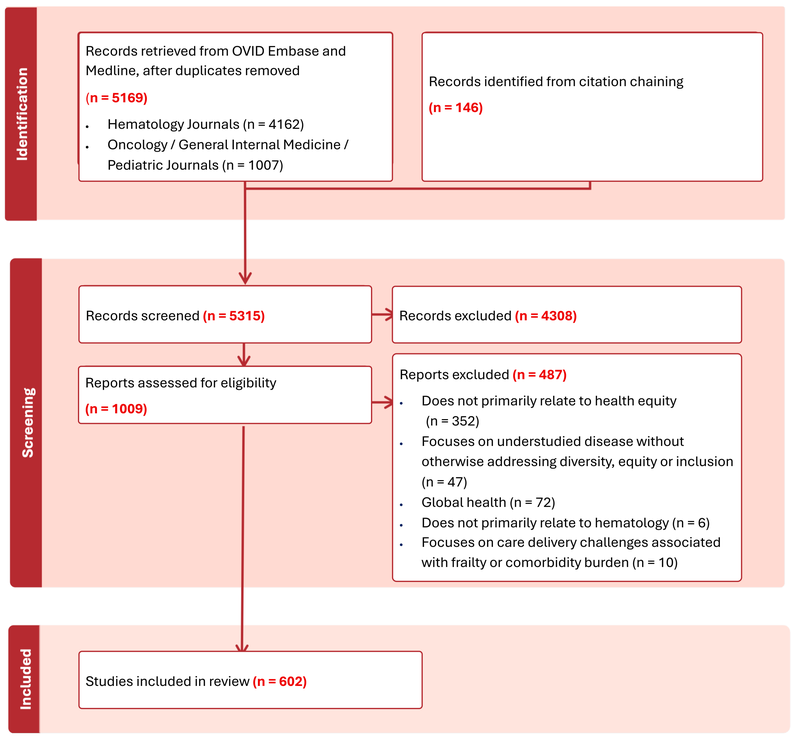
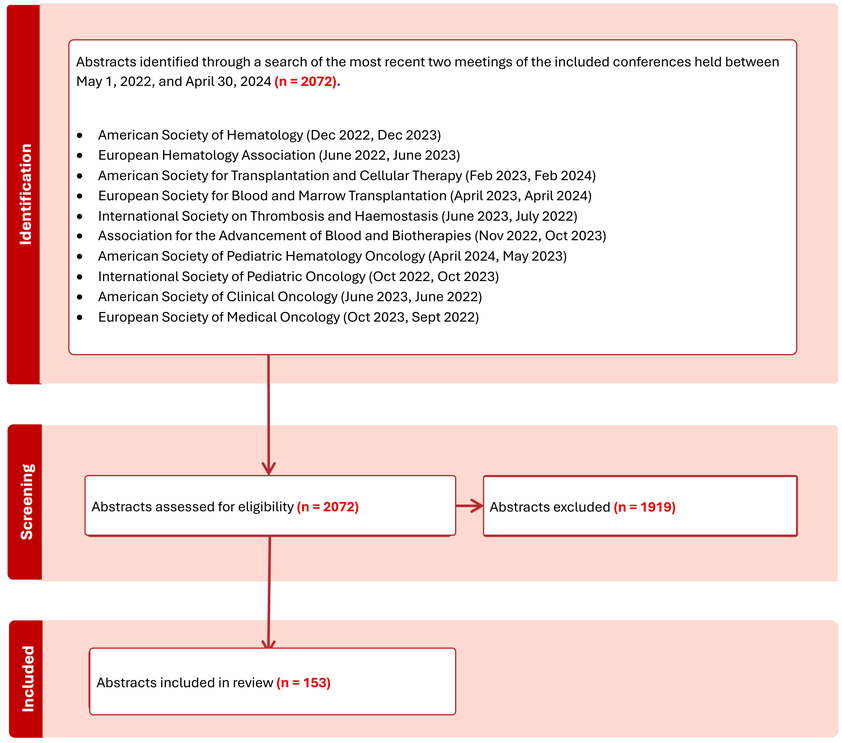


Figure 2. PRISMA flow diagram of included abstracts examining health equity in hematology



CONCLUSION

- Our analysis, the first of its kind to our knowledge, highlights recent progress characterizing inequities and clarifies areas warranting further study.
- Areas of future work should address disparities impacting understudied populations with consideration of intersectionality, across classical and malignant hematologic disorders, and testing interventions to address disparities, and partnering with advocates from populations impacted.
- Similar scoping reviews are warranted across other areas of internal medicine to identify specialty-specific disparities and guide the integration of equity into clinical practice and policy.
- This review will serve as an important educational resource to advance equity, helping researchers and the field in general to assimilate the rapidly expanding hematology HE literature.

SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

Scoping Review Protocol

Compiled Extracted Data

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

P.P. is employed by Merck; however, her work on this scoping review was conducted separately from her employment. No other authors report conflicts of interest.

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Presented by Bonnie Lu

Evidence of Conflict of Financial Interest

	Co-author	Conflict disclosures
1	James Troyer	No conflicts of interest to disclose.
2	Kate J. Krause	No conflicts of interest to disclose.
3	Ajibike Lapite	No conflicts of interest to disclose.
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9	Pallavi Pillai	P.P. is employed by Merck; however, her work on this scoping review was conducted separately from her employment.
10	Cristian Taborda	No conflicts of interest to disclose.
11	Lynda Villagomez	No conflicts of interest to disclose.
12	Phuong T Vo	No conflicts of interest to disclose.
13	Ruth W. Wang'ondu	No conflicts of interest to disclose.
14	Angela C Weyand	No conflicts of interest to disclose.