

# Editor's comments

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► <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/rapm-2020-101984>



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**To cite:** Sites BD, Davis M. *Reg Anesth Pain Med* Epub ahead of print: [please include Day Month Year]. doi:10.1136/rapm-2021-102829

In this issue of *RAPM*, Levy and colleagues provide an overview of several concepts related to the interpretation of associations from observational studies.<sup>1</sup> Due to ethical considerations and high cost of clinical trials, observational studies continue to be used to inform practice and for policy decision-making. Such decisions may be as profound as determining how to prioritize vaccine administration in the midst of a pandemic. The problem is that the purported relationship between an exposure (ie, therapy/intervention) and health outcomes can potentially be distorted by a number of factors. While many of these issues are inherent to observational data, the good news is that a deeper understanding of these concepts can help mitigate incorrect interpretation.

The editorial board at *RAPM* commissioned the article and assured that it included diverse perspectives including that of a clinician, statistician, and student. We believe that topics related to epidemiology and statistics often get presented in a way not readily accessible to a clinical audience, making their relevance to our work opaque. At *RAPM*, we aspire to effectively communicate such principles and make them relevant (and

exciting) to all consumers and producers of scientific writing. The degree to which we all have a better grasp of these concepts and strategies will hopefully translate into more informed decision-making and an appropriate perspective on timely clinical issues. We are eager for you to share this manuscript with your colleagues, friends, and patients. Thank you for all you do to make outcomes better for our patients!

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**Contributors** Both authors created this document.

**Funding** The authors have not declared a specific grant for this research from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

**Competing interests** BDS is the Editor-in-Chief of *Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine*. MD is the Statistical Editor for *Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine*.

**Patient consent for publication** Not required.

**Provenance and peer review** Commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

## REFERENCE

- Levy J, Lebeaux R, Christensen B. Journey across epidemiology's third variables: an anesthesiologist's guide for successfully navigating confounding, mediation, and effect modification. *Reg Anesth Pain Med* 2021.