

HARM DONE: DISMANTLING THE COLONIAL & ANTI-BLACK STRUCTURES OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Carrie Wade

The white male has long been at the center of Medical Research. The grand narratives shaped by this Eurocentric point of view serve few well, even despite efforts to curb his unethical efforts against “others.”

A joint Twitter chat between #MedLibs and #CritLib illuminated how far behind many Medical librarians are regarding the historical and continuing colonialism that permeates the production and structures of information.

This paper will highlight the complicated colonial problems that hide in current Medical information and research practices. Firstly, examining the way institutions attempt to safeguard ethical practices but falter—via representation on Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and research fraud. Secondly, this paper addresses ways that colonialism exists in the literature through Eurocentric research methods and Evidence-Based Practice protocols and researcher-population relationships that uphold colonial hierarchies. Lastly, in the categorization and classification of Medical information exist myriad issues, specifically in Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms which still use problematic terminology.

After posing these issues I raise the question, “how do we teach about this and work to dismantle the long-standing practices that our institutions uphold?” Amid research agendas shaped by Eurocentric governments and corporations that ignore the needs of marginalized communities, we have many things to consider.