LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Reply to: Gastric Cancer Prognosis: Strong Correlation Between Incidence and Survival

TO THE EDITORS:

We extend our appreciation to Marrelli et al. for their interest in our recent publication. We are fortunate to have a melting-pot population in Los Angeles County which facilitated the demonstration of disparate gastric cancer outcomes among its four major racial and ethnic groups.¹ Although we initially grouped all Asian ethnicities together, we strongly suspected that the heterogeneity in birthplace, diet, lifestyle, environmental exposures, etc., among the Asian ethnicities would influence gastric cancer outcomes.

As Marrelli et al. have indicated, Koreans have the highest gastric cancer incidence in the state of California.^{2,3} Our anecdotal surgical experience that Koreans fared better than patients of other race and ethnicity has been confirmed by our recent investigation.⁴ This seemingly conflicting higher incidence with higher survival should also be qualified with respect to Koreans having the highest percentage of uninsured Asian residents in Los Angeles.⁵ These observations, therefore, suggest a unique biologic predisposition and tumor behavior which cannot be accurately assessed within the confines of this study. In

this regard, we have recently initiated molecular/genetic profiling of gastric cancers by racial and ethnic groups.

Finally, we hope that our comments here and those by Marrelli et al. further highlight the need to closely examine the impact of heterogeneous racial and ethnic populations in determining the outcomes of clinical trials for gastric cancer.

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