

Response

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We appreciate Ujueta et al. for sharing their perspectives regarding the importance of environmental contaminants such as air pollutants and contaminant metals as risk factors for cardiovascular disease. We fully acknowledge a growing body of evidence linking these factors to the development of cardiovascular disease, including peripheral artery disease (PAD).^{1,2} Indeed, the American Heart Association published a policy statement entitled, “Guidance to Reduce the Cardiovascular Burden of Ambient Air Pollutants”³ in the Fall of 2020 which underscores this link.

In the policy statement on the reduction of nontraumatic lower-extremity amputations,⁴ we focused predominantly on actions directly related to PAD, including increased public awareness and medical professional education, evidence-based “medical approaches” to prevent, detect, and manage PAD, and legislative/regulatory, organizational, and health care system policies targeting PAD. As noted in our policy statement, we believe with those actions and policies, “we should be able to achieve the goal of reducing the rate of nontraumatic lower-extremity amputations by 20% by 2030.” If the aforementioned environmental factors can be controlled simultaneously, we may be able to accelerate the process and exceed the goal.

References

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2. Navas-Acien A, Selvin E, Sharrett AR, Calderon-Aranda E, Silbergeld E, Guallar E. Lead, cadmium, smoking, and increased risk of peripheral arterial disease. *Circulation* 2004;109:3196-201.
3. Kaufman JD, Elkind MSV, Bhatnagar A, et al. Guidance to Reduce the Cardiovascular Burden of Ambient Air Pollutants: A Policy Statement From the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 2020;142:e432-e47.
4. Creager MA, Matsushita K, Arya S, et al. Reducing Nontraumatic Lower-Extremity Amputations by 20% by 2030: Time to Get to Our Feet: A Policy Statement From the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 2021;143:e875–e91.