Nearly 1,000 medical students, residents and fellows and international medical graduates submitted posters to be considered for the AMA Research Symposium. About 450 were accepted.

And now, after voting among participants and AMA Members resulted in the field being whittled down to five, the finalists will compete in the inaugural AMA Research Challenge.

All five finalists will present to a group of experts in medicine, in an event to premiere on YouTube Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. CT. In advance of the contest, the five finalists—all of whom are medical students—offered insight on their research and how it may shape their future in medicine.

**Studying med student burnout as a med student**
Burnout rates among medical students are higher than those of same-aged peers who are not pursuing careers in medicine. As a medical student at Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Eli Levitt had a stake in learning more.

**COVID-19 and the ventilator lottery**
Ventilator access in the first days of the COVID-19 pandemic was troublingly limited. Many wondered how ventilators were being distributed to patients. That question compelled Victoria Danan, a medical student at Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University, to look deeper.
Exploring the effects of the e-cigarette epidemic
The inner workings of the human body are one of the first topics medical students cover, generally through studying anatomy and conducting dissections. Through exploring that topic, Shamsh Shaikh, a medical student at Boston University School of Medicine, gained an interest in cardiac physiology. As his interest in the workings of the heart took root, he also witnessed the surge in e-cigarette use among younger Americans. The intersection of those interests inspired his research project.

The neurological effects of COVID-19
In the days after the pandemic, Aimen Vanood, a medical student at Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, was pulled from clinical clerkship with her colleagues. In the coming weeks, she would hear of faculty members and residents getting sick and learn of the common symptoms associated with COVID-19. She also began to wonder about the virus’ longer-term effects.

Front-line workers’ response to PPE shortages
At the outset of the pandemic, personal protective equipment was in short supply. Putting health care workers in a situation, in some instances, in which they were asked to risk their own safety to treat sick patients without the proper equipment. How front-line workers handled that situation was a topic of interest to Heerod Malekghassemi, a medical student at Touro University Nevada College of Osteopathic Medicine.