COMMENT

Early Career Investigator: Biocommentary

Shina Menon[1,2]

I was born in Palghat, Kerala and grew up in New Delhi, India. Having trained in New Delhi, Detroit, and Cincinnati, I now work at Seattle Children's Hospital as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and I am also the Medical Director for our Acute Renal Therapies program. I received my medical degree from Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi and completed a residency in pediatrics at Lok Nayak Hospital. I became interested in nephrology early in medical school because my dad was diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease shortly after I started. I would accompany him to dialysis on Saturdays and would hear the nephrologists and nurses round there. As an 18 year old, I thought nephrology was equal parts math and magic.

After completing my residency, I joined the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) as a clinical researcher. In those days, AIIMS was one of the few centers in India providing pediatric nephrology subspecialty care, and we saw a lot of referrals from across the country. I started my research career under the mentorship of Dr. Arvind Bagga, and my initial few projects were all on the nephrotic syndrome. Following that I did my Pediatric Nephrology fellowship and residency at the Children's Hospital of Michigan, where Dr. Rudolph Valentini got me interested in dialysis. After this, I did a fourth-year fellowship in Acute Care Nephrology and Dialysis under the mentorship of Dr. Stuart Goldstein at the Center for Acute Care Nephrology (CACN) at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

At CACN, I found supportive mentors and colleagues who were doing exciting clinical work and research. After years of training, finally I found what I was most passionate about—Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) and Critical Care Nephrology. With Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Raj Basu, I worked on early identification of AKI using 'Renal Angina' and novel kidney biomarkers and long-term outcomes of patients after AKI. In the past few years, studies have shown that while we are getting better at identifying AKI in the ICU, it is often not recognized on the hospital floors, and consequently, patients are not managed appropriately. The article highlighted in this edition of Pediatric Research looks at a clinical decision support system, which includes electronic alerts and care plans, to help identify and manage AKI.

My advice to other early career researchers is to focus on a topic you are passionate about and find a supportive mentor. As a clinical researcher, I like to think if my work will impact the patients I care for and improve their outcomes. I also recommend getting to know other early career researchers in the field—not only to develop future collaborations but also to have a peer support group.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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