

## COMMENT



# ECI biocommentary: Gregory Costain

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I was born and raised in the small Canadian province of Prince Edward Island. All my schooling happened at public institutions in Canada, including post-secondary education at Queen's University (Bachelor of Science in mathematics), McGill University (Master of Science in mathematics), and University of Toronto (MD and PhD degrees, and 5 years of residency training in Medical Genetics and Genomics). I have been employed as a physician-scientist at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids®) since 2020. As a medical geneticist, I work with families to try to understand the causes of unexplained health issues in babies, children, and youth. The goal of my research program is to advance the clinical utility of genomics, through better interpretation of rare genetic variants, ending diagnostic odysseys, and maximizing the benefits of genetic testing for families. One priority population for our team is children with medical complexity.

My first scientific mentor was Dr Anne Bassett, a psychiatrist and geneticist who has selflessly supported every step of my career. She introduced me to the world of clinical genetics and rare disease research. My interest in pediatrics specifically was kindled during my clerkship training in medical school, when I realized the degree to which genetics was already being integrated into the care of children at major tertiary care centers like SickKids. I later chose to stay at SickKids because of the many clinical and research opportunities here, including the Scientist-Track Program at our Research Institute, and because of the strong bonds I had developed with staff and families over the course of my training. With our current hospital President and CEO (Dr Ronni Cohn) and our Chief of Research (Dr Steve Scherer) both being geneticists, there is enthusiasm at the highest levels for supporting genomic medicine and precision child health.

I am unsure what prescriptive advice to give to those coming along behind me. I do take comfort in the original version of an oft-truncated figure of speech: “a jack of all trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than a master of one.” I have found that being a practicing physician helps with setting research priorities, and that my children Maddie and Felix help me put things in perspective whenever there is the inevitable research set-back. My hope is that the emphasis on collaboration and team science will continue to grow in pediatric rare and genetic disease research.



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