



COMMENT

Maggie Stanislowski—August ECI biocommentary

Maggie Stanislowski^{1,2}*Pediatric Research* (2018) 84:148; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41390-018-0065-1>

I grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and then attended Pomona College to study mathematics. Following my undergraduate studies, I taught high school math as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Tanzania. This experience reaffirmed my desire to have a career with broader societal impact, and I decided to pursue a graduate degree in statistics. I attended Colorado State University, where I was an NSF IGERT (Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship) fellow in the Program for Interdisciplinary Research in Mathematics, Ecology and Statistics (PRIMES). I enjoyed the collaborative aspect of this program, and I completed a Master's degree in statistics, but I felt increasingly drawn to health-related fields. I took a job with the Veterans Administration Clinical Assessment Reporting and Tracking (VA-CART) program as a statistician doing cardiology-related health outcomes research, while also taking courses related to health, including nutrition and biomedical sciences. I was fortunate to have numerous mentors at the VA who helped me to explore graduate programs that would leverage my quantitative skills and satisfy my interest in health. This ultimately led me to learn more about the field of microbiome research. I immediately knew that this was the field for me; it was fascinating, it had the potential to fundamentally change how we approach health and disease, and it integrated my interest in nutrition with my experience in statistics, ecology, and quantitative research methods. I chose the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Colorado's School of Public Health because of the strength of the department and the opportunities to study the microbiome in the context of cardiometabolic diseases. I have been drawn to studying younger populations largely because it is much easier to prevent disease or

curb its progression than to reverse the course of established conditions. My path to a PhD in epidemiology was somewhat long and indirect, but I am very passionate about this field of research and its potential to substantially improve the health of people around the world. I have been lucky to find incredibly supportive mentors throughout my career (many of whom are the co-authors on this paper), and I would encourage others who are considering a career in research to be both patient and fastidious when choosing a field of study and identifying possible mentors.

Photo: Maggie Stanislowski

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Competing interests: The author declares no competing interests.

Publisher's note: Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

¹University of Colorado at Denver – Anschutz Medical Campus – LEAD Center, Aurora, CO, USA and ²Veteran's Health Administration – Eastern Colorado Healthcare Colorado, Denver, USA

Correspondence: Maggie Stanislowski (maggie.stanislowski@ucdenver.edu)

Received: 7 May 2018 Accepted: 11 May 2018

Published online: 12 June 2018