

## Biocommentary—ECI highlight September 2017

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I grew up in Portugal, between Braga and Lisbon. I then went to college at the University of Porto, where I got a 6-year PharmD, followed by a Master in Epidemiology and a PhD in Public Health. During my training, I did internships at the World Health Organization—Europe in Denmark and Charles University in the Czech Republic. Currently, I work as a researcher at the Institute of Public Health of the University of Porto (ISPUP) and I have a part-time appointment at the University’s Medical School teaching epidemiology.

My interest in research started while assisting on a project designed to monitor disease trends and policies directed to musculoskeletal disorders. But the decision to pursue a research career came mostly from meeting a number of people who were passionate about finding out how population

health works, i.e., what makes some groups of people healthier or sicker than other groups, beyond individual makeup. Among them I should highlight my long-time supervisor Henrique Barros, Professor of Epidemiology and current President of the International Epidemiological Association, who has been a true inspiration. I should also mention the people that I have been lucky enough to work with at ISPUP, particularly Ana Martins and Teresa Monjardino, whose interest in bone health has been a great source of encouragement.

After finishing my doctorate in 2012 I joined the research team of Generation XXI, based in Portugal, which is one of the largest interval birth cohorts in Europe. This has been a unique experience that has allowed me to work with longitudinal data on musculoskeletal health since the prenatal period, which is an area where most birth cohorts have little tradition. I am particularly interested in exploring the early determinants of musculoskeletal health, and specifically the relations between bone mass accrual, the design of sagittal posture, and the development of musculoskeletal symptoms and distress throughout the life course.

I would advise fellow researchers to look for ideas and people that inspire you. Try to love what you don’t know and to have as little prejudice as possible towards unfamiliar theoretical frameworks and practical solutions. Get ideas and insight from distant places—in my case this was HIV research. Be humble and curious of what others can teach you about health and disease, from the Professor at a conference to the person next to you on the bus.

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