

Early career investigator highlight—November

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I was born in Kuwait and spent my childhood and school years there. After graduating from high school, I spent a brief period in Kuwait University studying Allied Health Sciences before changing plans to move to Dublin, Ireland, and enroll in Medicine at Trinity College, Dublin. I knew then that I wanted to study and work in pediatric medicine. My mother and father, both of whom were among the first recognized pediatricians in Kuwait, were my primary role models. After my graduation from medical school, I enrolled in a Pediatric Residency, followed by the first part of my fellowship in Neonatology. During that time, I completed a post-graduate degree (Doctor of Medicine) in University College Dublin under the mentorship of Professor Eleanor Molloy. The time spent working and studying with Professor Molloy inspired me to embark on a career of research in neonatal hemodynamics and learn neonatal echocardiography. My first project involved using echocardiography and biomarkers to assess the severity of a patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) and predict important PDA-related complications.

I continued my research interest in neonatal haemodynamics during the latter years of my fellowship training, which I spent in Toronto, Canada. There I met my next mentor, Professor Patrick McNamara. Under Professor

McNamara's supervision and guidance, I continued my research and echocardiography training, making my short three years in Toronto very memorable. I returned to Ireland in 2012 to take up a consultant neonatologist post in the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, Ireland. In 2013, I established a neonatal hemodynamics research program where I continued my research interest in PDA and expanded to other neonatal conditions with important hemodynamic consequences, including pulmonary hypertension and neonatal encephalopathy. Our manuscript published in this issue is a result of this program and the successful collaboration we have with our colleagues across the city.

Success in the research field requires a genuine desire to improve patient care. Having a good understanding of your area of interest and the knowledge gap that needs addressing is vital. A thorough understanding of research methodology is also essential. A fruitful research career is always the result of co-operation with peers and senior colleagues. Listen and learn from your mentors, work in an environment that has the infrastructure and supports that promote research, and develop a collaborative network with colleagues near and far who share similar interests; do not view them as competitors but, rather, seize the opportunity to work together and develop long-lasting relationships. This approach has been of particular benefit to my research career to date. And most importantly, be humble.

I am truly indebted to my mentors who taught, supported, and encouraged me along the way. Those include Professors Molloy and McNamara, whom I have already mentioned. In addition, I also want to acknowledge my Pediatric Cardiology mentors who were vital in guiding me towards a career in neonatology with a special interest in echocardiography, and who taught me functional and structural echocardiography: Professor Luc Mertens from Sick Kids in Toronto, Canada, and Dr Orla Franklin from Our Lady's Children's Hospital in Dublin, Ireland. I also want to acknowledge my collaborators in North America, Phil Levy and Amish Jain, and those closer to home in Europe, including Jan Miletin, Anna Curley, Gene Dempsey, and Willem de Boode. Finally, I want to thank my amazing wife Anne who always supported me along the way.

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