

Early career investigator highlight—March

Kriti Puri¹



I grew up in Chandigarh, nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas in India. As the daughter of an anesthesiologist, I was always curious about my father's conversations with his residents about blood gases and fluid status. I was influenced by the professional and personal strengths of the career—the intrinsic sense of purpose, the patient always being the larger goal in all pursuits, and the process of learning from the past (in the form of literature) to improve outcomes for the future. During medical school, at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi, these informal exposures developed fully into a fascination with the body's homeostatic mechanisms, especially the intricacies of cardiovascular physiology. I was also struck by the relationship that my pediatrician had with our family—he was the senior resident in the nursery when I was born, and he was my doctor till the time I left for college. As I applied for residency spots, I knew

I was moving toward a specialty caring for critically ill children. And there was no better place for training than the legendary Cincinnati Children's Hospital, where I found friends, mentors, and role models, all within a few days! Research and the process of learning from observations and experiments had been a key inspiration for going into medicine. During residency, my interest in pediatric cardiology flourished under my mentor Dr Cnota. I learned from his clinical approach, and his curiosity about clinical questions inspiring research projects. As survival in congenital heart disease improves, growth and development is an integral outcome. Understanding the anatomic defect, its physiologic manifestations, and its influence on fetal growth, would help us understand its multi-system interactions, and better prepare families and care providers for these children. I am now a pediatric cardiology fellow at Texas Children's Hospital, and excited about further training in critical care toward a career as a pediatric cardiac intensivist. I have been fortunate to have mentors who initiated me into any field I was interested in, and very kindly guided me throughout different facets of life as a physician. As a beginner in the field of academic pediatric cardiology, my one advice would be to identify the right mentors, who share and amplify your enthusiasm, and a group of patients, who make work exciting and fulfilling every day.

Disclosure: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

¹Section of Pediatric Cardiology, Department of Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, USA.
Correspondence: Kriti Puri (puri.kriti@gmail.com)

Received 15 November 2017; accepted 19 November 2017; advance online publication 3 January 2018. doi:10.1038/pr.2017.305