



COMMENT

October ECI Biocommentary

Brian Stansfield¹*Pediatric Research* (2018) 84:474; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41390-018-0145-2>

I grew up in the metro Atlanta area and attended the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University for both medical school and pediatric residency. After a brief stint as a pediatric emergency room physician, I pursued training in neonatal/perinatal medicine at Indiana University. It was during these years as a clinical fellow that I was first introduced to laboratory research, and I was hooked! Under the mentorship of David Ingram and D. Wade Clapp, I was encouraged

to pursue research training in the Pediatric Scientist Development Program. The PSDP afforded me the unbelievable opportunity to be fully immersed in my research in order to solidify my skill set and prepare me for a career as an independent physician-scientist. My first project was to examine how activation of the p21Ras pathway in myeloid cells affects cardiovascular development and pathology. The most intriguing part of my work on this initial project was the idea that I had expertise and knowledge in an area of medicine and science that few others had obtained. It was rewarding to form a hypothesis, perform the experiment, and share the results with interested colleagues. I also greatly enjoy the creative side of scientific investigation where I get to “connect the dots” and formulate new strategies for solving clinical problems.

Upon completion of my clinical and PSDP-supported fellowships, I was recruited to join the Department of Pediatrics and Vascular Biology Center at Augusta University. The tremendous support from my home institution and senior investigators, including Neal Weintraub and David Fulton, has enabled me to quickly acclimate and push forward into independent investigation. As I have now become a mentor to graduate and undergraduate learners, I am learning that the best lessons are taught by failure and that perseverance is essential for success. Also, I have learned to pursue interesting data wherever it leads, constantly reworking my hypothesis on the way. Our publication in this issue of *Pediatric Research* is a testament to that idea. I am thankful for trainees such as Emily Masoumy and collaborators such as Jennifer Thompson, who are passionate about their work and have taught me much about mentorship, science, and enabling people to be successful. I hope that I can continue to pursue answers to clinical problems related to cardiovascular development with others throughout my career.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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