

COMMENT



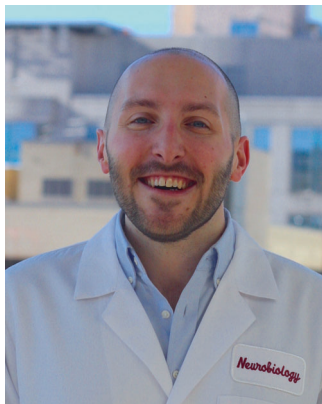
ECI Biocommentary: Brian T. Kalish

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I am currently an Assistant Professor of Paediatrics and Molecular Genetics at the University of Toronto, a Neonatologist at the Hospital for Sick Children, and a Scientist-Track Investigator in the Program in Neuroscience and Mental Health at the SickKids Research Institute. I grew up outside of Chicago, IL. I studied Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, then completed medical school at Harvard. My path to pediatrics and research was heavily influenced by Dr. Mark Puder, a pediatric surgeon-scientist at Boston Children’s Hospital. I completed a Howard Hughes Medical Institute-funded research year in Mark’s lab, focusing on fatty acid biology and parenteral nutrition-associated liver disease, which became the topic of my medical school honors thesis. My experience rounding on patients in the NICU with Mark, combined with my exposure to translational investigation in his lab, inspired me to pursue neonatology and dedicate my career to research.



I completed a pediatric residency on an Accelerated Research Pathway in the Boston Combined Residency Program, followed by a fellowship in the Harvard Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine Program. I changed research directions to focus on neuroscience, as I recognized that our ability to understand and protect the

newborn brain is one of the most important frontiers in neonatology and pediatrics. Therefore, I pursued a post-doctoral research fellowship in neurobiology with Michael Greenberg at Harvard Medical School. Mike was pivotal in my journey to becoming a scientist—I learned rigorous, cutting-edge molecular neuroscience and how to harness “technical courage” in my experimental questions. During my time in the Greenberg laboratory, I was supported by the March of Dimes, the Pediatric Scientist Development Program, and a NIH K08 award. After fellowship, I was on faculty in the Division of Newborn Medicine at Boston Children’s Hospital before being recruited to SickKids.

My advice to other aspiring early career investigators is twofold: First, invest the time and effort in obtaining high-quality research training under a mentor with a track record of success in supporting physician-scientists. Choosing the right mentor is of paramount importance. My post-doctoral fellowship with Mike Greenberg gave me both the technical and intellectual skills necessary to become an independent investigator and developmental neuroscientist. I am deeply indebted to Mike, who created an environment that supported independent thinking while pushing me to ask and answer big questions with precise experiments. Second, extend your training outside of your comfort zone. Take every opportunity to learn new skills and gain exposure to new or unfamiliar fields, as this expanded lens will make you a more curious and creative scientist.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares no competing interests.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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