

## COMMENT



# Early career investigator biocommentary: Katherine Guttman

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I am a neonatologist focused on ethics and communication in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). I grew up in Philadelphia where, from a young age, I wanted to explore different points of view and understand how people communicate. This interest led me to pursue a degree in theater with a minor in sociology as an undergraduate at Dartmouth College. During medical school at the University of Pennsylvania, I explored how my interests overlapped with questions in bioethics and completed a master's degree in bioethics. I have always seen ethics and communication as closely linked with good communication being an antidote to some ethical challenges. The study described in the current issue was inspired by my interest in bioethics and my hope that understanding differing perspectives on ethical ambiguities can help guide counseling and decision-making.



I became interested in childhood disease processes and enjoyed working with and supporting parents, leading me to complete residency in pediatrics and then fellowship in neonatology at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Through challenging conversations with families, especially in the NICU, I continued to explore ethical issues in pediatrics and became interested in understanding how physicians should communicate with families. During fellowship, I had the opportunity to investigate quality of communication and parents' experiences

of NICU hospitalization. My fellowship project focused on communication relating to goals of care in the NICU. During that time, and with the help of career defining mentorship from John Flibotte and Sara DeMauro, I began to truly see myself as a researcher. With their support and guidance I started to put the pieces in place to launch my career as a physician scientist.

Upon graduation from fellowship, I was recruited as a clinical investigator at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS) where I have received extraordinary mentorship from Amy Kelley and incredible support from Lisa Satlin, Chair of Pediatrics. At Mount Sinai I have built a research program focused on communication with parents of seriously ill infants. My advice to those who are beginning to explore this path is (1) to surround yourself with supportive mentors, (2) to see rejection as a normal part of the process of learning to be a researcher and not as a reflection of failure, and (3) to have patience and trust the process—it won't ever be perfect but with time and effort the pieces begin to come together.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Guttman is responsible for the content in this commentary. She approved the final manuscript as submitted and agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares no competing interests.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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