

Highlighting our Pediatric Heroes



The last issue of *Advances in Pulmonary Hypertension* that was devoted to a pediatric theme was published 5 years ago, so I thought it fitting to run another

pediatric issue and to highlight some of our pediatric PH heroes. If you look closely at the cover, you'll see the same 5 children who graced the cover 5 years ago. These children are the best testament to the advances in the field of PH and, likewise, the greatest motivators of the science and drive to find a cure. But, short of a cure, children battling PH just want to be kids. I believe pediatric clinicians need to focus on quality of life a lot more, as

distance walked on a 6-minute walk test may not reveal whether a child with PH will be able to ride a bike, play baseball, go to a prom, or just be a kid. The children on the cover are prime examples of kids *living* with PH. In addition, as another tribute to our kids, we have a special twist in this issue in the "Ask the Expert" column. Myung Park, MD, has given up her post in this issue and permitted another pediatric PH patient to tell her story as a first hand "expert" on what it's like to struggle with the day-to-day issues of PH, failure of her medical therapy, and how a lung transplant gave her a new life. I want to thank the author, Jessa, personally for her honest account of her journey and her tremendous courage. She is a true hero! I

also want to thank the authors for their expertise and wonderful pieces on pediatric PH-related issues and, of course, my editorial board and section editors for their commitment and devotion to the journal and the PH community. Finally, a very special thanks to my guest editor, Dunbar Ivy, MD. We collaborate frequently as we share a very similar mission toward having PH kids live the fullest lives they can within the constraints of their disease.

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Guest editor's memo

Pediatric PH: New Challenges and Perspectives



This issue of *Advances in Pulmonary Hypertension* highlights the important changes in the recognition of the causes of PH in children and its treatment.

PH in children differs from adults as children frequently have multifactorial disease, with a combination of a congenital heart defect, chronic lung disease, and an abnormality of lung development. The "fetal origin" of PH in children has been emphasized by Dr Steve Abman in his article on diagnosis and treatment of the child with broncho-

pulmonary dysplasia. Currently there are no FDA-approved therapies for children with PH/PAH; however, therapy for these children has improved quality of life in many. As described in the article by Dr Delphine Yung, therapy for children is based on experience, whereas therapy for adults is based on controlled clinical trials. These advances have improved the quality of life for children with congenital heart disease and also those with idiopathic PAH and heritable PAH as described by Dr Mary Mullen. Dr Mullen's article also describes a pediatric-specific algorithm for the diagnosis of IPAH/HPAH in

children. Finally, Aimee Doran, an experienced pediatric PH nurse practitioner, describes the unique challenges to family life when a child is diagnosed with PH. Our patient perspective this issue highlights that many children with PH are growing up to be energetic young adults with new challenges and perspectives. While dramatic improvements have been seen in the diagnosis and treatment of children with PH, many hurdles still remain.

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