

Episode: *Author Interview: “How Should We Measure Effectiveness of Medical-Legal Partnerships?”*

Guest: Prashasti Bhatnagar, JD, MPH

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

[00:00:03] TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the Author Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I'm your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Prashasti Bhatnagar, a law/public health postdoctoral scholar at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University in Columbus. She's here to discuss her article, coauthored with Dr Deborah F. Perry and Margaret E. Greer, "[How Should We Measure Effectiveness of Medical-Legal Partnerships?](#)", in the August 2024 issue of the Journal, [Standards in Medical-Legal Partnerships](#). Prashasti, thank you so much for being here.

[music fades]

PRASHASTI BHATNAGAR: Thank you so much for having me.

[00:00:50] HOFF: So, what's the main ethics point that you and your coauthors are making in this article?

BHATNAGAR: The key ethics points that we are highlighting in our article is this need to shift how we evaluate the effectiveness of medical-legal partnerships, or MLPs, moving beyond patient and hospital-level outcomes. Instead, we argue in res that MLPs should be evaluated on the basis of how they build community power. That is, the extent to which MLPs shift power towards impacted communities to set, influence, and implement health equity agendas.

[00:01:29] HOFF: And so, what's the most important thing for health professions students and trainees specifically to take from your article?

BHATNAGAR: Well, the most important thing to remember and take away is that community leadership and community power are integral to building health-affirming systems, and community, and impacted communities, have long been leaders in imagining sustainable and effective solutions to advance health justice. So, we invite health professions students and trainees to push for building community power by advocating for and participating in community-driven processes for developing and implementing MLP research and evaluation protocols.

[00:02:10] HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to your article that you didn't have the time or space to fully explore, what would that be?

BHATNAGAR: That's a really great question. One important point we would add is that some MLPs, for example, MLP Hawai'i, are already working towards centering community power within their models. Similarly, in a forthcoming article, I discuss how MLPs can adopt movement lawyering principles to help build and amplify the collective power of communities facing health injustices. So this work is well underway. Our article focuses on the research and evaluation aspect of MLPs, and specifically describes the role of academic MLPs in building community power to advance health justice. [theme music returns]

[00:02:57] HOFF: Prashasti, thank you so much for your time on the podcast today, and thanks to you and your coauthors for your contribution to the Journal this month.

BHATNAGAR: Thank you so much for having me and for the opportunity to share our work.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of this month's issue for free, visit our site, [journalofethics.org](http://journalofethics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.