

Episode: *Author Interview: “How Should Senior Surgeons Help Junior Colleagues and Trainees Experiencing Regret?”*

Guest: Carlie Arbaugh, MD, MS

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 Dr Carlie Arbaugh, a surgical resident at Stanford Health Care in Stanford, California. She’s here to discuss her article, coauthored with Dr Kimberly E. Kopecky, “*How Should Senior Surgeons Help Junior Colleagues and Trainees Experiencing Regret?*,” in the March 2025 issue of the Journal, [Regret in the Moral Psychology of Surgical Professionalism](#). Dr Arbaugh, thank you so much for being here.

DR CARLIE ARBAUGH: Thanks so much for having me. [music fades]

[00:00:46] HOFF: So, what is the main ethics point that you and Dr Kopecky are making in this article?

ARBAUGH: I think the point that we wanted to make in this article is that we have an ethical responsibility to debrief about challenging cases, and I think that’s both for a provider wellness standpoint as well as for a patient care standpoint.

[00:01:07] HOFF: And what do you think is the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to be taking from this article?

ARBAUGH: Absolutely. I want trainees to know that unanticipated complications and outcomes are a very normal and expected part of surgical training and surgical career. It happens to everybody. And so, I really, it’s not a matter of being an inadequate provider or failing in some way, but rather, an opportunity to learn and to grow, and also just a common experience that we have as providers, because it’s just part of the job that we have. And so, just to normalize the experience, but also to improve the way that we debrief about these experiences and the way that we support each other as colleagues and kind of the culture that we build in our community around these sorts of events.

[00:02:06] 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?

ARBAUGH: Yeah. So in our article, we talk a lot about how senior surgeons can support junior surgeons or trainees. And so, we really focus on the steps that the more senior person in that either dyad or relationship should act. But as someone who’s still a trainee myself, one thing that we didn’t really talk about in the article, but which I’ve been experimenting with and which I’m

incorporating into my own practice, is that these sorts of discussions can be initiated by the trainee themselves as well. And so, it doesn't always have to come from the senior surgeon. It can be the junior surgeon or trainee that can prompt these sorts of discussions or debriefs and also help to build those relationships and change the culture. [theme music returns]

[00:03:06] HOFF: Dr Arbaugh, thank you so much for your time on the podcast today, and thanks to you and Dr Kopecky for your contribution to the Journal this month.

ARBAUGH: Thank you so much.

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