

Episode: *Author Interview: "COVID-19 in 2024"*

Guest: Teddie Bernard

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 Teddie Bernard, a recent graduate from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a bachelor's degree in fine arts and a former art of medicine intern with the Journal. They're here to discuss their comic, "*A Comic About COVID-19 in 2024*," in the March 2025 issue of the Journal, [Regret in the Moral Psychology of Surgical Professionalism](#). Teddie, thank you so much for being here.

TEDDIE BERNARD: Hi, Tim. Thanks for having me. [music fades]

[00:00:45] HOFF: So, what is the main ethics point of this comic?

BERNARD: So, this comic shares about my experience catching COVID-19 in January of 2024, and then it expands to talk about how data and what measures people should take to stay safe seem harder to find than before. So, I think one of the main ethics points is like, how do we keep each other safe as our cultural understanding and maybe willingness to address COVID diminishes? And it kind of doesn't posit a solution, but I think that this is something that we all kind of need to keep in mind as we move more into a world where COVID is an everyday thing and hasn't gone away and does still affect the lives of millions of people. So, the comic is structured in a sort of memoir-into-facts style, right? We follow a first-person narrative, and then it kind of branches into here's some data things I found, here's how long COVID is affecting people. So that's the sort of structure of it.

[00:01:50] HOFF: And what do you think is the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to be taking from this comic?

BERNARD: I think that the thing that is something that comes up again and again for me is transparency. How can things be more clear to everyone, right? In the face of a pandemic that's still hurting people, how with long COVID being a mass disabling event, like transparency about numbers, statistics, and what we can do to protect our community and ourselves is super crucial. And a pandemic can't be stopped by just a few people choosing to take precautions. I guess the thing that I think would be important to take away from this comic is, how do we try and find ways to promote community care, right? That is the really crucial thing that I'm wondering and I'm hoping that we can all come together and find new avenues to do in the future.

[00:02:56] HOFF: And finally, if you could add something to this particular piece that you didn't have the time or space to fully explore, what would that be?

BERNARD: I think that there's, this is an ongoing situation, and this is a comic that feels like I could just be doing every six months an update about stuff on it. How can we make that information that is actually getting in front of people's faces instead of being posted on a link that is maybe a little bit hard to access on their website? How do we think about community protection? So there's questions about that that I think continue to arise in this situation. It isn't something that just has died down and is fixed now. It's, there's still complications, and it's not clear what a solution might be. [theme music returns]

[00:03:47] HOFF: Teddie, thank you so much for your time on the podcast today, and as always, thank you for your contributions to the Journal.

BERNARD: Yes, of course. Thank you, Tim.

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*.