

Episode: **Author Interview: “Summer Without Shelter in Tampa During COVID-19”**

Guest: Madeline Hooper

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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 format for accessing the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Madeline Hooper, a third-year student at the University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine in Tampa Bay, who serves as Humanities Coordinator for Tampa Bay Street Medicine, a student-run health clinic caring for refugees and persons experiencing homelessness. She's with me to discuss her article, co-authored with Lauren Lenkowsky, Dr Lynnette Menezes, and Dr Jordan Metzler, “*Summer Without Shelter in Tampa During COVID-19*”, in the November 2021, issue of the Journal, *Health Care and Homelessness*. Madeline, thank you for being here and welcome to the show. [theme music fades out]

MADELINE HOOPER: Thanks so much for having me.

HOFF: To begin with, what is the main ethics point of your article?

HOOPER: You know, there's a lot of things that we talk about in terms of ethics in medicine, and one of them is certainly around vulnerable patient populations and how we can best treat them and support them. And the thing that I've run into a lot as a student doctor working with an organization that is intended to provide medical care and other support to our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness, I realize there's just not a lot of their voice that is heard in the professional discussion and literature about how to best care for them.

HOFF: Mmhmm.

HOOPER: And so, I think that through this project and this paper, we're trying to show the importance of getting these individuals' perspectives and hearing what they actually think about their life and how they think that their lives, as they live them day to day, in the same neighborhoods that we live in, the same cities, interacting with same spaces, how are they experiencing homelessness from their point of view? I think that when we lose sight of the patient's perspective, we stop providing really quality care and being able to help the patient in the way that they need. So, the objective here is to give voice to our homeless, or neighbor who is experiencing homelessness in order to hopefully empower better health care and support services as we provide them.

HOFF: Great. Thank you. And it sounds like you were sort of getting to this point, but what do you see as the most important thing for your fellow health professions students and trainees to take from your article?

HOOPER: I think that it's really important for us, as we're learning, to really learn the patient's story and realize the power that we have as listeners. I think that as student

doctors, any kind of student clinician, there is sometimes the feeling that we have little to give to a clinical scenario because we haven't mastered the art of medicine yet. But I think that listening to patients and their stories and figuring out how to best help them to reach their health goals, ultimately, that's what I'm in medicine for. And we are equipped to do that as trainees. And I think that this project helped me understand and appreciate the fact like.... It helps me appreciate exactly what I can get from a conversation and the importance of that human connection that we provide through our clinical interactions.

HOFF: And then finally, if you could add a point to your article that you don't feel got sufficient exploration, what would that be?

HOOPER: We had, through our project, we were able to give disposable cameras to multiple people that we knew through our clinical work at Tampa Bay Street Medicine. And so, we have other stories to tell. And that was a very thrilling process to be able to see all the diversity of the stories and the experiences. It's not a homogenous group that you're taking care of, even if they're all experiencing homelessness in some capacity. And so, this story that we tell, the photo narrative that we're capturing in partnership with the patient who participated in this project with us, it's really specific to him. And it's really interesting, I think, in the context of what last summer was with COVID, a lot of social unrest, but there are other perspectives that also deserve to be shared. And ultimately, I think that goes back to my point that I was just making about how we have to listen to our patients and learn about their stories. And we have all those skills, usually, when we know nothing about medicine, really, and we're just coming in as first-year students.

And I also think on a personal note, from an artistic perspective, I was so excited by the images that our participants captured through their photography. And I think it's really interesting to think about how we share spaces with our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness, but we interact with them so differently. And it helped me reimagine Tampa, where I was living, the same street corners that I traverse every day. It made me think about them in a different way.

And I think that that was just, it's a really interesting thought exercise, and it connects back to the fact that as medical providers, we are community leaders, and health happens in a lot of places that are not our hospitals and clinics. And so, thinking about how we can support our patients in the workplace, at home, in our greater communities is something that is always on my mind and that I hope that people take away when they see our paper and when they're moving through their own versions of clinical practice and study. [bright theme music returns]

HOFF: Madeline, thank you so much for being on the podcast and for your and your co-authors' article this month and for the continued work you do.

HOOPER: My pleasure. Thanks so much for having us again.

HOFF: To read the full article and the rest of the November 2021 issue for free, visit our site, [JournalofEthics.org](https://www.journalofethics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.