

Episode: Author Interview: “*Why Professionalism Demands Abolition of Carceral Approaches to Patients’ Non-Adherence Behaviors*”

Guest: Aminta Kouyate

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

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 Aminta Kouyate, a third-year medical student at the UC Berkeley UCSF Joint Medical Program and a Master of Science candidate in the Program in Medical Education for the Urban Underserved at the UCSF School of Medicine and the UC Berkeley UCSF Joint Medical Program. She’s here to discuss her article coauthored with Drs Nhi Tran and Monica Hahn, [Why Professionalism Demands Abolition of Carceral Approaches to Patients’ Non-Adherence Behaviors](#), in the March 2022 issue of *The Journal*, [Toward Abolition Medicine](#). Aminta, thank you so much for being here. [music fades]

AMINTA KOUYATE: Thank you for having me. Excited to be here.

HOFF: So, to begin with, what’s the main ethics point that you and your coauthors are advancing in this article?

KOUYATE: Well, I think along with the collection that we’re publishing as a part of, this idea that abolition medicine requires the sort of interrogation of any and all systems and dynamics that operate in a way to monitor, surveil, and punish people, and a recognition of understanding the abolitionist perspective and contextualizing non-adherence in a larger analysis that includes structural racism and the systemic barriers to care that historically marginalized individuals face in our health care system. And also, just contextualizing also medicine within history and within politics and how they inform each other so that we are moving away from ahistoricism in medicine and this idea of colorblindness and being apolitical, but really actually understanding how all of these things intersect and impact our patients’ lives.

HOFF: And what do you see as the most important thing for your fellow health professions students and trainees to take from your article?

KOUYATE: I think this idea that it’s the responsibility of the medical system to change and that we must make the extra steps, especially considering the harm that people have already experienced in health care systems both historically and now. And that we really have to fundamentally change the system that we are a part of to truly best serve our patients.

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

KOUYATE: I think we wanted to add a little bit more about understanding and reframing within the context of abolition medicine. A lot of things kind of intersect here in looking at how not only is non-adherence or noncompliance an issue, also when we've reframed medical mistrust and thinking about how Dr Oni J Blackstock says it perfectly that medical mistrust is not just a lack of trust in the medical system, but the belief that the medical system is acting or will act with ill intent towards a certain individual or a group. And I think that really plays into how we think about adherence and understanding that it's on us to make sure that we are not perpetuating a system that has harmed and continues to harm patients from marginalized communities, but in fact, working in partnership with them to build health care plans that really center them and their lived experience and contextualize all of that within this structurally racist system. [theme music returns]

HOFF: Aminta, thank you so much for your contribution, you and your coauthors', and thank you for being on the podcast.

KOUYATE: Thank you.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of the March 2022 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*.