

Episode: *Author Interview: “What the COVID-19 Pandemic Teaches Us About Pediatric Iatrogenic Risk”*

Guest: Katherine Pumphrey, MD, MHA

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

[Access the podcast.](#)

[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 way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Dr Katherine Pumphrey, a pediatric hospital medicine fellow at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. She's here to discuss her article, coauthored with Dr Jessica Hart, “*What the COVID-19 Pandemic Teaches Us About Pediatric Iatrogenic Risk*,” in the February 2023 issue of the Journal, [Child Abuse and Neglect](#). Dr Pumphrey, thank you so much for being on the podcast with me. [music fades]

DR KATHERINE PUMPHREY: Thanks for having me. It's great to be here.

HOFF: What's the main ethics point that you and Dr Hart are making in this article?

PUMPHREY: So, for this article, we acknowledge that before the COVID-19 pandemic, diagnostic errors were identified as a priority research topic by the Children's Hospitals' Association's Solutions for Patient Safety Network. However, our article really describes how the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the ongoing risk for diagnostic error and its relationship to pediatric iatrogenic morbidity and mortality.

HOFF: So, what's the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from your article?

PUMPHREY: I think the most important thing for health professions students and trainees to take from this article is that despite the emergence of diagnostic errors as a national priority for patient safety research, relatively little is known about diagnostic error in pediatrics, and diagnostic error continues to be a common risk to patients. Unlike other areas of interest in patient safety, such as health care associated infections or medication errors, really few gains have been made in addressing diagnostic error. Therefore, we really need those health professions students and trainees to bring thoughtful and innovative approaches to combating diagnostic error.

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?

PUMPHREY: At the same time that we were writing this article and I think had already submitted, in March 2022, an article that was a narrative review regarding diagnostic error was published in *Pediatrics*. And I think if we had one more point we can make in this article, we might actually refer the reader to look at that narrative, because I think it really balances our article, which talks about the ethics and diagnostic error, again, related to iatrogenic morbidity

and mortality and gives you a really well-rounded explanation of the history of diagnostic error in pediatrics. [music returns]

HOFF: Dr Pumphrey, thank you so much for being on the podcast. And thanks to you and Dr Hart for your contribution to the Journal this month.

PUMPHREY: Thank you so much. Appreciate you having me.

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*.