



Diversity and inclusion in science

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Perspective on women in science

“Personally, I find immunology to be an intellectually stimulating science. The complexity of most primary immunodeficiencies together with the increasingly complicated treatment regimens require a working partnership between the patient, their families, and the medical team. As a woman in medicine in general, and in clinical immunology and allergy in particular, I find it very important to work as a respected, valued, and equal part of a team, with a dedicated contribution to improve patient care and partake in research. Equally important is having the safety of a balanced family life and physical/mental health and wellness. I find myself very lucky at this point in my life, being part of a great physician team and having full support from my spouse.

I am forever grateful to those who came before me, as it was their commitment to improving the system that has led to so many more opportunities for women in science today. To reach where I am now has still been very challenging, demanding, and lonely at times. I had to work hard to attain the training I desired most, however, I was fortunate to be mentored with utmost respect by both men and women who were role models – they showed me the way forward, to identify

with the scientific community, and provided me freedom and creativity in my clinical and research work during my training.

My advice is to believe in yourself and believe that what you do matters. You may question your abilities at each failure, but you are not alone! Don’t forget, great scientists are made, not born, and even they faced on-the-job doubts along the way.

Strive to create your networks, find your peer support and mentoring that you need. Be open and outspoken about the challenges that you face as a woman. With many tasks demanded by society, eventually, you have to decide what your ultimate goals are and what things are worth fighting for.

Be there for others; over time, even the strongest women might be affected and discouraged from staying in academia. Make a point to acknowledge the work and achievements of other women.

And finally, always keep in your mind that this is your life. It is a one-time opportunity – make it as happy, satisfying and balanced as you can, until you reach your dreams.”

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Biography

Dr. Amarilla Mandola was born in Budapest, Hungary, and completed her general medicine training at the Semmelweis University, Budapest. She improved her English over the years, and worked as a teacher and tutor for pre-med foreign students in medical English and medical terminology. She started her pediatric residency at the 1st Department of Pediatrics, Semmelweis University, and subsequently moved to Israel with her husband where she completed her pediatrics residency at the Soroka University Medical Center, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. She was awarded resident of the year in 2012. Between 2013 and 2017, Dr. Mandola worked as a staff Pediatrician at the Pediatric Department A, Soroka University Medical Center, and took on an active role in the Pediatric Immunology and Allergy

Clinic treating primary immunodeficient children from across southern Israel. Due to the diverse population in this geographic region (Jewish origin, immigrants from around the world, refugees from Africa, and the vast majority of the Arabic speaking Bedouin population in Israel), Dr. Mandola gained exposure to various immunological pathologies and conditions, some of which are unique and rare. To attain a more thorough and in-depth understanding of disease mechanisms and treatments pertinent to immunology and allergy, she pursued and completed a 3-year combined fellowship in Clinical Immunology and Allergy at the Hospital for Sick Children and University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. To gain skills in wet lab research, she also took part in investigations unravelling the causes of multiple novel primary immunodeficiencies, under the supervision of Prof. Chaim Roifman. Currently, Dr. Mandola is a staff physician in the Pediatric Department A, Soroka University Medical Center, and undertakes a leading role in the team of the Pediatric Primary Immune Deficiency Clinic and the Pediatric Allergy Clinic, together with Prof. Amit Nahum and Prof. Arnon Broides, serving patients in Southern Israel from Beer Sheva to Eilat. By combining her expertise in Pediatrics and Immunology, Dr. Mandola advocates for immunodeficient patients and their families, to promote early diagnosis and ensure optimal access to medical care, secure patients' interest, and improve patient's medical care by adopting new treatments and follow-up strategies. With a strong foundation in clinical research, she has the opportunity to integrate research into her clinical work in order to better understand the mechanisms of the disease in her patients. Dr. Mandola is also involved education in the postgraduate and undergraduate education of residents and medical students in the field of Clinical Immunology, Allergy and Pediatrics.