



Lifeline

Andrea Schneider is an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA, USA). She received her MD and PhD in epidemiology from the Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD, USA), where she also completed her neurology and neurocritical care training. Her research programme is centred on traumatic brain injury (TBI) epidemiology and the prevention of TBI-related neurodegeneration and dementia.

Who and what inspires you?

My family, my patients, my research, my experiences. All are linked, and keeping an open mind allows me to be inspired each day.

Who was your most influential teacher, and why?

Two people come to mind: Michael Weiss, who allowed me to join his lab as a high school student and who opened my eyes to a career in medicine and science; and Frederick Brancati, who introduced me to the field of epidemiology as a first-year medical student and who encouraged me to pursue a PhD in epidemiology, changing the trajectory of my career by teaching me how to use population-based data to improve patient outcomes.

What is your favourite book or film, and why?

I enjoy fantasy books and have read the Harry Potter series several times. I have been known to fall asleep watching movies, but books capture my attention.

What was your first experiment as a child?

I was the subject of my 9th grade science fair project. I have type 1 diabetes and studied how my glucose levels changed from before to after running a mile, with or without eating 15 g of carbohydrates prior to running.

What is your greatest fear?

I do not like turbulence when flying, but I do enjoy exploring new places, and traveling with my family makes the experience more enjoyable.

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

Inspired by my mother's persistent quoting of Winston Churchill, the advice to "never never never quit" continues to serve me well in all realms of life.

If you had not entered your current profession, what would you have liked to do?

I am lucky that my job is comprised of two distinct professions (that of being a physician and that of being an epidemiologist) and I really cannot think of any other profession that would be as satisfying, except perhaps being a stay-at-home mother.

How do you relax?

I have always enjoyed running (I have run several marathons) and have recently gotten more into cycling. Anything that involves physical activity helps me to relax in the face of stressful situations.

Action Potential

Supporting young carers across neurological disorders

Providing care for an individual with a neurological disorder can be stressful, complicated, and time-consuming for caregivers of all ages, including youth under the age of 20. Young carers can provide the same type, measure, and complexity of care as do their adult counterparts, but often without acknowledgment, support, or resources.¹ The precise number of youth providing care for people with neurological disorders is unknown, yet data from the UK and the USA suggest that current evidence might be an underestimate.^{2,3}

Global Neuro YCare is a non-profit organisation founded by research and clinical professionals to address gaps in programmes and provide support and resources for young carers. Our foundation, which is dedicated solely to children and youth who care for a family member with a neurological disorder, provides support in several ways. First, educational materials are available that are crafted specifically to be culturally accessible for young people. Second, caregiver support is provided through collaborations with country-based organisations to develop targeted youth and family programming. Finally, the foundation works with state-owned and non-governmental organisations to raise awareness, inform policy and guide clinical practice, and advocate to change the care landscape for young carers at the global level.

In 2024, the foundation released *LUKi & the Lights*, an animated short film about a robot diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, who is cared for by friends. The film is silent, and the use of no language makes it accessible across populations. The film is freely available at <https://www.globalneuroycare.org> with accompanying educational resources.

As the global burden of neurological disorders increases, so too do associated caregiving needs. Addressing the care burden in neurology is possible, but only with collaborations that attend to all caregivers.

Melinda S Kavanaugh

- 1 Kavanaugh MS, Cho CC, Howard M, Fee D, Barkhaus PE. US data on children and youth caregivers in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. *Neurology* 2020; **94**: e1452–59.
- 2 Leu A, Berger FMP, Heino M, et al. The 2021 cross-national and comparative classification of in-country awareness and policy responses to 'young carers'. *J Youth Stud* 2022; **26**: 619–36.
- 3 Kavanaugh MS, Stamatopoulos V, Cohen D, et al. Unacknowledged caregivers: a scoping review of research on caregiving youth in the United States. *Adolesc Res Rev* 2016; **1**: 29–49.