

Humans of CDI

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Dr. Adeline Boatin, MD, MPH is an Assistant Professor in Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Biology at Harvard Medical School and an attending at Mass General. She received her undergraduate education at Harvard University, her medical degree from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and an MPH with a focus on international health from the Harvard T. Chan School of Public Health.

Dr. Boatin is a researcher, clinician, and educator and through her research, she aims to reduce global reproductive health inequities and has a focus on the use of digital technology to improve surgical care, ranging from decision-making for surgery to post-operative recovery. Her current research portfolio explores wireless monitoring technology to overcome human resource limitations in post-operative care. She also leads a multi-site and multi-country study examining caesarean delivery use in sub-Saharan Africa. Dr. Boatin is a Ghanaian

native, born in Zambia, and has lived, studied, and worked in Zambia, Ghana, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Dr. Boatin strongly believes in educating and mentorship and has received the AK Goodman award for mentorship from the Dept of OB/GYN at MGH and the Young Mentor Award from Harvard Medical School. Away from research and clinical work, she loves the outdoors and weather permitting enjoys long walks, hikes, biking and many water-based activities.

To learn more about Dr. Adeline Boatin's groundbreaking research in using wearable technology to monitor peripartum women in Uganda and her journey from resident to leading global health researcher, keep reading.

What impact has receiving the PSDA/CTDA award had on your career and science?

The CTDA gave me the opportunity to explore an area of research that most would be skeptical of and traditional funding sources hard to achieve: wearable technology for monitoring peripartum women in Uganda. And yet the explorative research conducted with the support of this funding laid the groundwork for me to successfully obtain a NIH K23 award and be at the forefront of researchers exploring the use of this technology and other such innovative technologies in the African context and among obstetric patients.

How has CDI impacted your career?

Aside from the material support provided by the CTDA, the biggest impact CDI has had has stemmed from creating a supportive community. This to me is a bigger and deeper impact than the financial support and really contributed to my sense of belonging at MGH. This was true during my time as a resident here at MGH and BWH in the combined OB/GYN resident program and has also continued into my attending career. CDI provides a space to make friends and connections with other trainees and now other attendings who share some of the similar challenges and joys that I do. A place where you know you can always go to ask any question and find a friendly ear!

When you started at MGH, what did you hope for or envision for your time here that's come true? What's surprised you? What were you hoping for that hasn't happened yet?

When I started at MGH as a resident, I hoped that I would eventually find my way to the career that had driven me to go to medical school in the first place: working on improving health care delivery around the world in places that need it the most. I did not envision becoming a clinical/researcher and that that path would enable me to achieve my goal, and I am

so grateful for the opportunities this path has enabled. A couple years ago as I was sitting in the airport waiting for my return flight from Entebbe to Boston, I ended chatting with a fellow passenger, and he asked me what I hoped to do when I grow up. As I started to respond to his question, I realized – wow, I’m actually doing exactly what I envisioned – contributing in tangible and practical ways to improving the quality of care on the African continent and working with a diverse global group of clinicians and students on my team. I hope can sustain this path and find a way to make it easier for others interested to join me on this path.

What change have you witnessed and what’s left to be done?

CDI has always had a visible attention and demonstrated impact to increasing diversity among the workforce at MGH and in so doing contributing to helping to improve health equity for patients seeking care at the hospital. This has been true since I first came to MGH as a resident in 2009. At that time, it seemed that attention to DEI efforts was largely confined to CDI and a small group of other committed individuals. In more recent years this attention and this circle has expanded, and the larger hospital and hospital leadership has seemed to own this commitment much more broadly. This has helped increased workforce diversity – somewhat, but a lot remains to be done and demonstratable impact still has yet to be achieved.

Do you have a favorite quote?

I think I have a favorite quote of the season...it changes from time to time. Right now, the one quote that resonates comes from an African proverb and states quite simply “Sticks in a bundle cannot be broken.” To me it speaks to the importance of building teams and teamwork, particularly across diverse settings and speaks to the power of groups to be get more done and to be resilient.

If you could do another job for one day, what would it be? OR, if you could switch jobs with another MGH staffer for one day, whose job would that be and why?

I would love to work in theatre directing or producing either a play, Broadway show or movie. It would be amazing to see this creativity in real time and get insight into the thought process, challenges and joy that comes from the creative process. For some shows/movies, it also seems like it would just be a lot of fun!

Tell us about your heritage. How does your heritage influence your work?

I was born in Zambia, to Ghanaian parents, and by the time I was 21 had lived in Zambia, Ghana, the UK and the US. My international upbringing and Ghanaian heritage directly relates to my passion for a career engaged in reducing global health disparities. As a child in Zambia and Ghana and an adolescent in the UK, I internalized the undeniable correlation between poverty, geography and health early in life. My desire to understand, learn and implement strategies to resolve health disparities was a continuing source of motivation, leading me to medical and public health school, to a residency in OB/GYN and now to a research career focused on using innovation to improve health care delivery.

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