



The Alma Dea Morani Renaissance Woman in Medicine Oral History Project

Catherine D. DeAngelis, MD, MPH

Interview Summary and Chapter Summaries

Interview Summary

Dr. Catherine DeAngelis is a Johns Hopkins University Distinguished Service Professor Emerita and Professor Emerita at the Schools of Medicine (Pediatrics) and Public Health (Health Policy and Management) at that same institution. She identifies two main areas in which she had major impact as a faculty member and administrator: building a system to deliver comprehensive pediatric and adolescent care (including training for physicians and nurses in this system); and addressing barriers to equity and fair treatment for women and other groups. Dr. DeAngelis served as the first woman Editor-in-Chief Emerita of *JAMA*, the Journal of the American Medical Association (2000-2011). She was awarded the Alma Dea Morani Renaissance Woman in Medicine Award in 2007. She is also a longtime member of the Board.

This five-hour interview takes place in five virtual sessions conducted between December 2020 and April 2021. Dr. DeAngelis shows her candor and her sense of humor from the beginning, as she describes her family life, where her relationship with parents, particularly her father, provided her with support for her desire to become a physician and shaped her commitment to equity and integrity. She also introduces the topic of her spirituality, a force that would flow through her life, and goes on to describe her nursing training (RN, 1960), experiences in medical school (MD, 1969), and the pathway that eventually led her to her goal: to be trained at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Dr. DeAngelis' narrative pinpoints her awareness of inequity and bias and she tells candid stories of her experience of prejudice against women in medicine and against her Italian-American heritage. She also notes her pragmatic approach to patient care, care delivery, and training,

and shares instances of how she learned to work within academic medical institutions to advance her plans. Dr. DeAngelis describes how she moved on from positions when she had met all the challenges she could in each role. This led her eventually to take on the role of Editor-in-Chief at *JAMA*. She charts her steps toward implementing her vision for the journal with her characteristic candor. In the final sessions, Dr. DeAngelis reflects on her legacy in medicine, progress for women in academic medicine, her commitment to mentoring, and her experiences with the craft of writing. She talks about *Pursuing Equity in Medicine: One Woman's Journey*, the memoir she published in 2016 after mentees asked her to record her stories. She goes on to talk about a novel she has in progress and speaks in unusually personal terms about how this work has dovetailed with her own contemplation of spiritual questions.

Chapter Summaries

Interview Session 1: December 22, 2020

Chapter 0-A
Interview Identifier
00:00:00
p.1

Chapter 1
Stories from Childhood
[00:03:19]
p. 4

Dr. DeAngelis sketches her early life in a relatively poor family. She talks about her close relationship with a father, who encouraged her intellectual interests [00:17:13], including her early interest in becoming a doctor [00:06:22 – 00:10:05]. She also discusses the importance of her family's Catholicism and the values of equality and fairness [00:14:03]. She comments on the importance of a father's support to women's success and tells a related funny story [00:19:35 – 00:21:44].

Gender and support: [00:19:35 – 00:21:44]

Inspirations: [00:14:03]

Path to medicine: [00:06:22 – 00:10:05]

Chapter 2
The Place of Religion in Life and Work

[00:25:45]

p. 13

In this chapter, Dr. DeAngelis explains more about the importance of religion over the course of her early life [00:25:45]. She talks about her early aspiration to become a missionary nun, her sense of spirituality and vocation to serve, though not necessarily to lead a religious life. She explains why she first went to nursing school (despite her long-term goal of becoming a physician). She also talks about what happened when she approached the Maryknoll Convent with the intent of following through on her vocation, and how she then went to medical school.

Inspiration: [00:25:45] and entire chapter

Chapter 3

College and Medical School in the 60s Bring Early Experiences as a Leader and Counselor

[00:34:13]

p. 18

Dr. DeAngelis talks about the leadership roles she took on at Wilkes College and talks about the role she came to serve as confidant to other students. She observes that this gave her the opportunity to learn about complexities of young adulthood for men and women, insights that would serve her later in work with adolescents. She credits her mother with being a role model for these traits. She talks about her own “Four ‘T’s” of a good leader: tough-mindedness, tenacity, thick skin, tenderheartedness. She recounts an experience that taught her about the importance of a thick skin to deal with prejudice against her Italian-American background [00:43:17 - 00:46:48].

Mentoring, serving as: whole chapter

Experiences of inequity: [00:43:17 - 00:46:48]

Chapter 4

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

[00:46:49]

p. 24

Dr. DeAngelis explains how she chose to attend “Pitt” for medical school. She describes the egalitarian atmosphere within the student body, despite the fact there were only 7 women out of a little over one hundred, and notes the sexism of faculty at that time. She provides examples of sexism and her reaction to call out the faculty member who didn’t believe women belonged in medical school [00:53:09 - to end of session].

Gender, sexism in medical school: [00:53:09 - to end of session]

Interview Session Number 2: December 29, 2020

Chapter 0-B
Interview Identifier
00:00:01
p. 33

Chapter 5
A Residency at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
00:00:35
p. 34

Dr. DeAngelis explains her choice to pursue a career in academic medicine: to engage in research and for the joy she found in teaching and mentoring. She tells how she attained her aspiration to go to Johns Hopkins. She talks about the environment for residents, the intensity of the training, and comments on the environment for women residents [00:07:52 - 00:10:22].

Environment for women, Johns Hopkins (1970-1972): [00:07:52 - 00:10:22]

Chapter 6
Harvard and an MPH
00:11:20
p. 40

Dr. DeAngelis explains her decision to pursue an MPH, not for the degree, but for the training in course design, medical law, and medical economics she needed to build training programs for nurses and physicians to handle wellness for children. She notes the controversy around training nurses at the time. She discusses her relationship with a mentor who instructed her in medical law [00:18:55 - 00:24:19], as well as the intercultural experience of living in Baltimore, and how working among the impoverished changed her perspective.

Mentoring: [00:18:55 - 00:24:19]

Chapter 7
Setting Up a Training Program at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons
00:25:45
p. 46

Dr. DeAngelis explains that she took a position at the Columbia School of Medicine on advice of former professor, Robert Cooke, MD, to start a certificate program training nurses in preventative pediatric care and wellness [00:25:45]. She tells stories of how she learned to set up a complex program, fund it, build necessary relationships, and work with institutional processes. She summarizes the success of the course and the controversial dimensions of the program for

nurses, physicians' assistants, and physicians. The recounts a funny story of how the program created a culture change [00:39:38- 00:43:04].

Impact and success: [00:25:45]

Impact on gender assumptions: [00:39:38- 00:43:04]

Chapter 8

Time for a Change, a Detour, and A Return to Hopkins

[00:44:17] to end of session

p. 53

Dr. DeAngelis begins by explaining why it's unusual for people in medical school to take a public health perspective. She notes that her training in nursing taught her to take that perspective. She tells a story that demonstrates how gender assumptions cause patients to associate actual care with nurses, not doctors [00:46:29 - 00:49:54].

Dr. DeAngelis then explains that after two years at Columbia, she needed a new challenge and wanted to return to Hopkins to build a program for comprehensive pediatric care. She comments on how physicians in other specialties are unaware of what general pediatrics does and its value. She describes how she took a position at University of Wisconsin and build a successful program that attracted a thousand patients to the program in two months. She recounts how a disappointing interview at Hopkins turned into job offer and her return to that institution.

Gender, patients and women physicians: [00:46:29 - 00:49:54]

Interview Session Number 3: January 6, 2021

Chapter 0-C

Interview Identifier

00:00:00

p. 64

Chapter 9

Back at Johns Hopkins as an Associate Professor

[00:00:22]

p. 65

Dr. DeAngelis describes setting up a program similar to the one she developed at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine to train nurses and eventually physicians in general pediatric care. She describes her influence on training and care in general through by bringing the new approach of following a panel of patients. She shares an anecdote to demonstrate the value of general pediatrics [00:06:12+ to 00:10:17]. She also explains how she started and developed her

program at Johns Hopkins to demonstrate its value, eventually establishing a pediatric ER in the late seventies [00:10:19 - [00:15:10].

Dr. DeAngelis also talks about starting a program for fellows following babies born of HIV-positive mothers, taking over the college health service, and offering pre-natal care to teenagers. She discusses the medical and financial advantages of offering comprehensive pediatric care.

Impact and success: [00:06:12+ to 00:10:17], [00:10:19 - [00:15:10]

Chapter 10
Marriage; a Battle with a Health System
[00:22:11]
p. 76

Dr. DeAngelis talks about her marriage to psychiatrist, James Harris, MD in 1979 and notes that this partnership added to her medical practice. She offers advice to today's women regarding marriage and family and describes how a good working team can help women out [00:25:00]-[00:27:10].

Dr. DeAngelis goes on to describe a battle with a new healthcare system that began signing up patients in a way that disadvantaged children's health [00:27:46]. She then talks about how her track record of successes enabled her to expand her program by becoming the residency director prior to becoming a dean.

Advice for young professionals: [00:25:00]- [00:27:10]

Learning administration: [00:27:46]

Chapter 11
Areas of Impact at Hopkins and Moving Into a Dean's Office
[00:32:56]
p. 83

Dr. DeAngelis states that, at Johns Hopkins, she had the greatest impact on equity for women. She talks about her study (1988 or 1989) of salary and promotion differences between men and women and the mentoring program she started to help women with promotion [00:33:19-00:40:04]. Dr. DeAngelis then talks about her promotion to Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Vice Dean of Faculty [00:40:48 - 00:45:55]. She tells the story of dealing with a faculty member known for sexual harassment and how she helped change the culture, including for gay and lesbian faculty [00:45:55 - 00:55:33].

Mentoring: [00:33:19- 00:40:04]

Addressing inequity, harassment: [00:45:55 - 00:55:33]

Chapter 12

A Break from Johns Hopkins and a New Challenge at *JAMA*

[00:56:08 to end of session]

p. 93

Dr. DeAngelis begins this chapter by explaining her pragmatic reasons for taking the position as deanship [00:56:46], so she could take care of what needed doing. She then explains why she left Johns Hopkins to become editor-in-chief of *JAMA*. She shares an anecdote that demonstrates how she deals with administration so a job can get done [00:56:46 to end of session+].

Leadership motives: [00:56:46]

Leadership style: [00:56:46 to end of session+]

Interview Session Number 4: January 12, 2021

Chapter 0-D

Interview Identifier: Session 4

00:00:00

p. 101

Chapter 13

Implementing a Vision for *JAMA*

[00:00:03]+

p. 102

Dr. DeAngelis recalls her interview for the position of editor-in-chief at *JAMA* [00:01:51], then talks about the “wonderful group” of people she worked with. She explains some logistics of their work and notes the increase in submissions they reviewed over the course of her 11-year tenure. She also explains what it meant to step away from roles at Johns Hopkins and the effect of a long-distance marriage during this time.

Dr. DeAngelis then talks about transforming *JAMA* into a real academic journal [00:06:27]. She goes on to note how she implemented ideas of equity in publishing and in clinical trials via her role [00:09:09]. She speaks about gender bias in publishing women authors [00:14:13], then talks about using podcasts ideas she implemented to draw attention to the journal [00:19:02].

Leadership vision and impact: [00:06:27], [00:09:09], [00:19:02]

Gender bias in publishing: [00:14:13]

Chapter 14
Facing Challenges as an Editor-In-Chief
[00:23:26]
p. 111

Dr. DeAngelis talks about tough moments: dealing with the board of trustees, with dishonest authors, and an extremely difficult EVP who attempted to take credit for bringing *JAMA* to financial health. She also discusses her accomplishments during her 11 years of service to the journal [00:29:46]. She then explains why she left the role [00:31:44] and summarizes additional accomplishments, such as joining *JAMA* with its archives [00:31:44], a move that involved strategizing against publishing politics.

Impact and success: [00:29:46]

Chapter 15
A Memoir and a New Writing Project
[00:35:44]
p. 117

Dr. DeAngelis explains that when she left her position at *JAMA*, discussions with her mentees led her to write her memoir, which she still uses for mentoring purposes [00:35:50 - 38:20]. She explains what she learned from this project [00:38:42], then segues to a new writing project undertaken during the Covid year, 2020 [00:40:00], that has enabled her address life questions and learn a lot about herself. She reveals lessons learned in a very personal discussion during the final half of the interview session (beginning: [00:46:25]).

Note: The Interview Subject states on record she would prefer not to make the conversation about her book public. She later decided to leave the full discussion of her novel in this interview transcript and the related video/audio.

Mentoring: [00:35:50 - 38:20]

Philosophy of life, personal values: (beginning: [00:46:25])

Interview Session Number 5: February 4, 2021

Chapter 0-E
Interview Identifier: Session 05
00:00:00
p. 131

Chapter 16
Mentoring and Other Support Needed to Promote Equity

[00:00:46]
p. 132

Dr. DeAngelis discusses her increased work in mentoring after she finished her memoir. She explains why mentoring is how she wishes to spend her time now [00:02:58]. She explains that she never had a mentor and details the benefits a mentor can bring to a young professional.

She observes that the need for mentoring has not changed over the years [00:06:05], and goes on to talk about how the problems are still the same. She talks about the advice she gives to men regarding participation in the household [00:07:57]; the advice to women regarding negotiations [00:11:51] and [00:24:10]; to men about creating equity with women [00:12:21]. She talks about her optimistic view of gender equity and an award for mentoring she established at Johns Hopkins [00:14:00]. She discusses what is needed now to advance gender equity and the individuals who can lead the way [00:16:45]. She discusses different types of collaboration [00:22:07] and discusses the importance of loving your work and rewarding and recognizing people to sustain their engagement with their work [00:27:30].

Mentoring: [00:02:58], [00:06:05]

Advice to young professionals: [00:07:57], [00:11:51], [00:24:10], [00:12:21], [00:14:00], [00:16:45]

Chapter 17
Sustaining a Sense of Vocation in Medicine
[00:32:27]
p. 149

In this final chapter, Dr. DeAngelis talks about activities she enjoys and her plans for the near future. She also reflects on the evolution of her spirituality [00:39:37] and the connection between a medical vocation and spirituality. She talks about how she has sustained herself during periods when her practice became difficult [00:42:16]. She also notes that she counsels other physicians going through a crisis with their sense of vocation.

Philosophy of life and personal values: [00:42:16]