

## Issue Highlights

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This issue offers excellent papers on a variety of topics. Here, I highlight two original research papers on genetic counselor training.

“The Relationship Between the Supervisory Working Alliance and Student Self-Efficacy in Genetic Counseling Training,” Caldwell, S., Wusik, K., He, H., et al. *J Genet Counsel* (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10897-018-0263-3>

This paper represents a breakthrough in the empirical study of clinical supervision for genetic counseling trainees. It deftly demonstrates how one can create an evidence base relevant to clinical supervision by examining tenets of the Reciprocal Engagement Model–Supervision, the only theoretical model of genetic counseling supervision. In this particular case, the authors designed a study that produced data bearing on the second tenet, that is, the role of a supervisory working alliance in the development of the trainee. Second year genetic counseling trainees completed surveys assessing their perceptions of the supervisory working alliance and their self-efficacy using the recently published Genetic Counseling Self-Efficacy Scale. Analyses demonstrated that self-efficacy and trainee’s perception of the supervisory working alliance are associated, suggesting that student’s confidence in their clinical skills may be enhanced if supervisors are encouraged to build a strong relationship with their trainees. These results are not only important in their own right but also provide a foundation for evidence-based clinical supervision!

“Training Methods for Delivering Difficult News in Genetic Counseling and Genetics Residency Training Programs,” Andoni, L., Hobson, W.L., Carey, J.C., et al. *J Genet Counsel* (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10897-018-0271-3>

Genetic counselors and clinical geneticists often work together, and though they may have distinctly different responsibilities in some areas, there is overlap in other areas. This paper by Andoni and colleagues is unique because it examines how genetic counseling trainees and clinical geneticist trainees are trained on a topic of overlap between the two professional groups, in this case, delivering difficult news to patients. The paper not only provides very useful information on training methods for delivering difficult news but also illustrates similarities and differences in the training of these two professional groups. Their results showed that these methods are more fully integrated into genetic counseling program curricula than genetics residency curricula, a finding that the authors hypothesize could be related to the emphasis on communication within the practice-based competencies of the genetic counseling profession. Overall, these results are interesting because they illustrate different approaches to addressing the same topic. Future research is needed to determine if these curricular differences are associated with trainee performance or patient outcomes.

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