

The Doctor Who Had the Answers

Dr. Robin Deterding '86, featured on "Mystery Diagnosis"

Robin Deterding, M.D., '86, made her television "debut" as the featured physician and medical advisor on an episode of "Mystery Diagnosis," a medical show on the *Discovery Health* channel. "It was fun, if a little intense," Dr. Deterding recalls.

The episode concerned her six-week old patient, Lariah, who was born in respiratory distress. "She was blue," her mother recalls. When doctors couldn't properly diagnose the problem, Dr. Deterding was called in. She diagnosed Lariah with a rare lung disease, Surfactant C Protein Dysfunction, a gene mutation. "Dr. Deterding did a wonderful job with the diagnosis," Lariah's mother says on a podcast about the episode.

This lung disease is among the pulmonary illnesses that are classified as Children's Interstitial Lung Disease (chILD). Dr. Deterding is director of the chILD Foundation, which helps kids and families struggling with these diseases.

These diseases, she says, are under-recognized but probably more common than known. The mortality rate is up to 30 percent, and lung transplants are some-

times needed.

The television show, though an intense experience, has helped raise the visibility of the foundation. The T.V. crew filmed the episode (titled "The Headache that Wouldn't Go Away") on site for three days at the Children's Hospital in Denver, intensely studying every detail and picking Dr. Deterding's brain like a young medical resident. "They questioned me for three hours with the camera very close. They do these 'artistic' shots like a close-up of the eyeball. I think it's just for the drama."

In addition to her television appearance, this spring Dr. Deterding completed the AAMC Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine, an exclusive, competitive training and networking program for female faculty.

She is associate dean for the clinical curriculum at the University of Colorado and professor of pediatric pulmonology at the Children's Hospital in Denver, which is considered one of top children's hospitals in the nation. The pulmonary section was ranked number 2 nationally by *Parents Magazine*.

"My involvement in



See Dr. Deterding speak about "Saving Lariah" on a podcast about "Mystery Diagnosis"

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFyTbz3VGHI

academic medicine is a direct result of my passion for medical education that really came out of my experience at SIU," Dr. Deterding says. She also says she was very well prepared clinically as she entered her fellowship in pulmonary medicine. She credits former chair of Medicine Sergio Rabinovich, M.D., for his ability to think about complex problems and complicated patients. "That became a part of me and what I do for these children with complicated problems."

Former SIU Chair of Pediatrics Dr. Randy Kienstra was the first to suggest that Robin should consider pediatric pulmonology. "And he was right," she confirms. "I like making a lifetime of difference treating children, and it's fun, too.

Being a lung specialist allows me to do all that."

Pulmonary problems are one of the most common problems in children. Nationally, only about 40 pediatric pulmonologists are trained each year.

In her free time, Robin spends time with her two children, Dori, 7 and Lucas, 2½ at their home in Boulder, hiking and skiing. And she still treats Lariah, who is now a happy 6-year-old. ●●●