

**Anna Wani, MD**

Assistant Professor

**What was your “ah-ha” moment when you knew sleep medicine was for you? / How did you get into sleep medicine?**

After an elective in sleep medicine during residency, I realized this was what I was looking for. It is my “ikigai”. Sleep brings together my passion for prevention, challenging evaluations, and multidisciplinary treatments. Sleep medicine has been a thoroughly fulfilling career which allows me to practice clinically, educate our future leaders in sleep, as well as research, and give back to the sleep and local community.

**What is the best part of practicing sleep?**

The best part of practicing pediatric sleep in one of the busiest labs in the nation is that no two cases are alike. I enjoy my work in pediatric sleep as the practice of sleep is so varied. In clinic, I enjoy visiting with families and children to try and help them sleep well. I see interesting referrals and second opinions, neurodevelopmental difficulties, autism, psychiatric, difficult social circumstances, and genetic syndromes in the clinic. Reading challenging sleep studies in the form of infant studies, challenging titrations, and interesting sleep study findings almost daily. My work makes tangible improvements in children’s mental health, growth and ultimately overall health. This extends into not just the child, but the whole family’s life and that is, ultimately the most fulfilling part.

**What's been your favorite or most memorable moment of your career journey so far?**

There have been so many fond memories I have had throughout my career, for which I am so thankful. More recently, we transitioned a patient from our clinic to an adult practice whom I had been seeing for 6+ years. When the family first came to me, they were at their wit's end. The parents’ whole life revolved around their nonverbal child- his inability to sleep and have a stable routine really limited not only his but the whole family’s ability to do anything. Mom and Dad slept in shifts so that they could monitor him, and everything they had tried seemed to not work. Thankfully with a lot of trial, error, and patience, we stabilized this patient on an effective sleep regimen within 3 months and parents were tearful at the departure of our clinic because they felt like they got their lives back. This interaction is memorable for me because I feel it highlights why the work we do matters, and I feel lucky to be a part of such an improvement in the quality of a family’s life.

**What has been the most enjoyable experience as a member of AASM?**

The most enjoyable experience as a member of the AASM has been the honor to serve on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. I have encountered and made connections with the incredible people that make up this stellar organization. From the staff to the members of the committee over the years to the board liaisons who are passionate about truly moving the field of sleep forward. Being a part of this committee has allowed me the pleasure to recognize leaders in DEI and sleep, award travel grants, and help move the organization forward in continuing to be a place which is welcoming of all people regardless of position, practice location, or type, ethnicity, race, gender, or disability- seen or unseen.

**If you could offer one piece of advice to someone who wants to get into the sleep field, what would it be and why?**

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Sleep is a dynamic and challenging field. My advice for someone wanting to get into the sleep field would be- do it! Get involved and utilize the many resources available through the AASM. I would also encourage someone looking to get into the sleep field to get involved in the sleep community- either locally, nationally, or internationally. The Sleep community is a unique make up of multidisciplinary, diverse, and bright minds that bring different perspectives to light. There is so much to gain from collaboration and immersing yourself!

**List three hashtags that describe you**

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#pediatricsleep #zzzdocmom #DEImatters