



Interview

In this interview with Tina Tan, President of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), we explore her vision for strengthening the infectious disease workforce, expanding vaccine access, and advancing paediatric infectious disease care. Tan outlines how IDSA aims to lead on evidence-based advocacy, multidisciplinary collaboration, and system-level impact in the years ahead.

Featuring: Tina Tan



Tina Tan

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Q1 What is your mission and vision for the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) during your tenure as President, and how do you see the organization advancing the field of infectious diseases in the coming years?

My mission and vision for IDSA during my tenure as President have been to continue advocating strongly for the society's strategic priorities. These include building and sustaining a broad, diverse, valued infectious disease workforce; promoting the IDSA as the leader and trusted source for timely, evidence-based infectious disease information and expertise; and expanding infectious disease essays, leadership, and efforts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to infectious disease threats to protect our community. Also, I want to get more information about healthcare systems and the critically important role that infectious disease practitioners

play in patient care, as well as helping healthcare colleagues recognize and understand the important role of pediatric infectious disease physicians.

Q2 You've spoken about the need for accurate and accessible vaccine information. What do you see as the biggest barriers to achieving equitable vaccine access?

The biggest barriers to achieving equitable vaccine access are numerous. They include limited healthcare services in different areas, geographic location and transportation issues, and the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation about vaccines on social media. Medical mistrust and the cost of vaccines also play a great role.

Q3 How can the medical community better combat misconceptions surrounding vaccines in areas of lower trust in public health initiatives?

It's basically about listening to patients' concerns about vaccines, addressing their questions empathetically, and providing them with scientifically sound information on the important benefits of vaccines. I then work with other individuals in the community whom the community members trust, such as religious leaders or other similar figures, to develop strong, scientifically sound messaging about the importance of vaccines and how they protect both individuals and their families.

Q4 What recent advancements or trends in pediatric infectious diseases are you currently most excited about?

So, the development of new vaccines and the optimization of antibiotic courses are necessary, because studies have shown that shorter courses are just as effective as some of the longer

courses still in use. There has also been a significant improvement in the care of infectious diseases for infants and children who are immunocompromised.

Lisa Akhtar, Assistant Professor, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, Illinois, USA, does absolutely fantastic work on herpes simplex virus, which is really helpful because more individuals are now presenting with recurrent infections and require suppressive therapy.

Q5 With the rise of antibiotic-resistant infections, what strategies can pediatricians implement to balance effective treatment with responsible antibiotic use?

I think one of the major things is to work on making more accurate diagnoses of a patient's condition and not use antibiotics "just in case." A lot of practitioners still do that. The key is to treat with the narrowest spectrum effective antibiotic and for the shortest duration recommended, so that antibiotics are not overused.

Q6 How can collaboration between pediatricians, infectious disease specialists, and public health officials be enhanced in a multidisciplinary team in addressing infectious disease outbreaks?

That's a really important question and one that is very relevant worldwide. We need to work together as a multidisciplinary team, using all healthcare providers' expertise and strengths to really address the different issues that arise during infectious disease outbreaks. I think what's really important is ensuring communication among all these individuals so that they can collaboratively develop a plan to basically help address all the major issues that arise with infectious disease outbreaks.

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