

Honoring Dr. Monika Mitra

Insights

12.03.25

Hooper, Lundy & Bookman, P.C. honors Dr. Monika Mitra on International Day of Persons with Disabilities for her important research and dedicated advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities.

Born and educated in Kolkata, India, Dr. Mitra earned an M.S. from Calcutta University before moving to the United States to obtain a Master's degree and a Ph.D. from Boston University, building a strong academic foundation in public health.

Dr. Mitra went on to research health outcomes and experiences of people with disabilities at the University of Massachusetts (UMass), where she served as an associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine and as the senior program director for the Disability, Health and Employment Policy Unit at the Center for Health Policy and Research.

"We know that people with disabilities are less satisfied with their quality of care, and we know they have greater difficulty accessing health care services and programs," Mitra said.

At UMass Medical School, Dr. Mitra and her colleagues conducted research concerning pregnant people and parents with disabilities, finding disparities in health outcomes and maternal health. Not only were pregnant people with disabilities more likely to experience complications during birth and deliver babies with lower birth weights than people who did not have disabilities, but as parents, they also struggled to be heard by and communicate with healthcare professionals, facing dismissive attitudes. Dr. Mitra's [research](#) has shown that pregnant people with disabilities report barriers regarding clinician knowledge and attitudes, physical accessibility of health care facilities and equipment, and a need for more information related to pregnancy and postpartum supports.

Her research found that parents with disabilities are often disempowered, disregarded or overly monitored in health contexts regarding their children. "If a disabled parent, even during pregnancy, speaks of their need for support, this is often seen as their inability to be a parent," says Dr. Mitra. "As a result, they live with this fear that their child will be taken away from them."

In 2018, Dr. Mitra became Director of the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy at the Heller School, Brandeis University, where she spearheads several national research initiatives, including the [National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities](#) and the [National Center for Disability and Pregnancy Research](#). Dr. Mitra's work emphasizes practical application, sharing science-based research findings with health care professionals and patients with disabilities in order to improve clinician training and quality of care, as well as improving health care policy to incorporate the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

Dr. Mitra's work is vital for disability rights because she bridges scholarship, policy, and advocacy. Her body of research on pregnancy and parenthood challenges stigmas painting people with disabilities as unfit or incapable and focuses on the improvements needed to create equitable healthcare outcomes for all. Hooper, Lundy & Bookman is honored to highlight her work for International Day of Persons with Disabilities.