

Issue Highlights

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The goal of original research is to produce new insights and new contributions to a field or discipline. While reviewing this issue's papers, I was struck not only by their individual contributions, but also by the way in which they reveal the evolution and maturation of the practice and discipline of genetic counseling. As examples:

“Operationalizing the Reciprocal Engagement Model (REM) of Genetic Counseling Practice: a Framework for the Scalable Delivery of Genomic Counseling and Testing” Schmidlen, T., Sturm, A.C., Hovick, S. et al. *J Genet Counsel* (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10897-018-0230-z>

This paper is about genetic counseling practice in the genomic era, yet it is also about the remarkable vitality and longevity of the principles underlying the practice of genetic counseling. Schmidlen and colleagues engage in an impressive undertaking to do just what the title says: they take the Reciprocal Engagement Model, a model of genetic counseling practice developed by Veach et al. in 2007, which was described as a practice model when genetic counseling occurred in more limited settings with limited patient populations, and concretely apply it to current times when genetic counselors have expanded into many settings and testing modalities have expanded their reach to entire populations. The value in explicitly developing this framework is to facilitate the practical implementation of genomic counseling based on core REM principles, as well as highlight specific nodes for research on outcomes of scalable delivery of genomic counseling and testing.

“Development and Validation of the Genetic Counseling Self-Efficacy Scale (GCSES)” Caldwell, S., Wusik, K., He, H. et al. *J Genet Counsel* (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10897-018-0249-1>

This paper is about genetic counselor training and professional development, an area that has come to the foreground now that our profession has experienced the “cycle of life” where the first cohorts of genetic counselors are retiring and increasing numbers of new genetic counselors are being trained. What does it mean to be a skilled genetic counselor, a master genetic counselor? How do we measure genetic counseling student development? Although these seem like existential questions, our profession has operationalized essential genetic counselors' skills through the practice-based competencies (PBCs). In this paper, Caldwell and colleagues go a step further in advancing our ability to understand and assess genetic counselors' skill and professional development. They propose *self-efficacy*, i.e., an individual's perception of their abilities to perform a given action in a specified situation—specifically in the context of the PBCs—as a useful way to assess genetic counselor professional development. They refer to this form of self-efficacy as Genetic Counseling Self-Efficacy. This paper describes the work of developing and assessing the reliability and validity of the Genetic Counseling Self-Efficacy Scale. This is a valuable measure that will undoubtedly be used in future research related to genetic counselor training and development.

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