LESLEY CURTIS: When I think about novel methods, and I think about the DCRI, I’m drawn to the fact that the DCRI creates new ways of doing things not just for the sake of creating new methods and new ways of doing things, but to solve specific problems. And those problems are often barriers that prevent us from—or maybe impede us from—actually generating the kind of evidence that patients and clinicians need.

The DCRI’s origins are in cardiology and cardiovascular disease, and I’ll say that when I came to the DCRI 20 years ago, the vast majority of the work was in that space, but over time, of course, what’s happened is that the DCRI has moved into so many other areas, right? And we look now at the areas that are represented by our faculty; think about the work that we now do—and lead—in pediatrics, right, which is just which is so, has been so important to the evolution of DCRI.

And the kinds of methods and approaches and data that we need in order to answer questions that are critically important for children and young adults, right? That’s—those are different from the kinds of data, the approaches that we need to answer questions that are related to older people.

So there’s just so much, so much, I would say, expansion of the methods development that’s happened over the, over the last 25 years, and it's only going to accelerate.

When I think about how over the last 25 years the world has changed, it's hard not to think about the explosion of data, right? And not just electronic health records, right, which is one source of data, but just the data that are everywhere—patient-generated data, sensor data, all kinds of data that we now have that really we look at and realize there’s such an opportunity to take advantage of that to, again, do the work that we do more efficiently, smarter, faster.

And yet it’s not easy to figure out how to do that, right? So that’s where that’s where the real, I think, the real problem-solving comes into play, what are we actually trying to do with all of these data that exist, where can these data be most beneficial, most impactful, and how do we use it, how do we develop methods that really harness that?

So as these data sources continue to grow and explode over time, it’s really imperative for us to keep our— to keep our creativity, right, to keep our creative thinking caps on because so often—and I've seen this in my career—a data source that maybe 20 years ago we’re like, ‘Yeah, I think we've gotten all we can out of that,’ when we think about it differently, we realize, ‘Ah! If we bring those data, together with a new kind of data or a new approach that we've developed, suddenly we turn a key and open up new insights, right, generate new discoveries. So I think it’s really critical for us to stay nimble, creative, flexible, and continuing to bring our, kind of our best, most creative minds to the problems and not get too stuck with what we know how to do.