

May 14, 2009

Center for Reproductive Medicine

The Cleveland Clinic

9500 Euclid Avenue, A.19.1

Cleveland, OH 44195

Re: Summer Internship Experience Letter

My summer internship with the Center for Reproductive Medicine was my first major foray into laboratory research and technical writing. I came away from the experience with skills that will serve me as a medical student and a researcher-physician for many years to come.

Aside from gaining experience at the laboratory bench, the internship helped me improve my skills accessing primary literature databases. Although it is easy to simply type a few keywords into the search box in PubMed, there are many useful shortcuts and MeSH tricks we learned that really narrowed the search results and filtered out articles that were not applicable. As a medical student, knowing how to find primary literature is an important skill. There are many questions in medicine to which there is not a simple, clear-cut answer. In situations like these, information may be found more readily in a case report or small study than in a textbook. For example, I recently rotated through child neurology and our team was consulted by the neonatal intensive care unit on a case of an uncommon congenital brain malformation called schizencephaly. The attending assigned me the task of finding the prognosis of newborns with schizencephaly. I first turned to well-regarded textbooks in pathology and neurology, but it quickly dawned on me that case reports or small studies would garner more information on the prognosis of this rare malformation. The next day I reported the motor, cognitive and language deficits based on different characteristics of the malformation from a review article and another small study on 40 schizencephaly cases. He ended up using that article when he met with the family of the newborn to explain what the expected functional prognosis would be.

The ability to critically analyze published articles and incorporate findings into original manuscripts and review articles is another skill that will continue to benefit me as a student and physician. Over the course of the summer and the following year, I collaborated on two review articles and an original manuscript, with another original manuscript still in progress. In order to write a review article or manuscript, I found that you must read a lot of articles and synthesize them in a clinically relevant way, in the case of a review article, or an analytically

supporting/contrasting way for the discussion section of manuscript. Working with more senior researchers was extremely helpful in learned how to interpret other research groups' work and highlight differences or similarities to our own results. Additionally, receiving constructive feedback about how to improve my scientific writing for publication was invaluable. Today I continue to work with the lab, as several of the articles I participated in are still in progress. Recently, one of the psychiatry attendings I worked with suggested our team write a case report for publication on one of our patients with an interesting idiosyncratic drug-induced reaction. The skills I've hone by working with the Center for Reproductive Medicine will definitely help me with this writing project and hopefully in many future projects to come.

Audrey Choi

Case Western University

School of Medicine

Class of 2011