

January 31, 2009

Dr. Ashok Agarwal
Program Director of the Summer Internship Program
Center for Reproductive Medicine
The Cleveland Clinic
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Re: Testimonial of Summer Internship Program

My Reproductive Research Summer Internship was an enlightening and rewarding experience. This past summer I attended the Cleveland Clinic as a volunteer Research Intern for Reproductive Medicine. During the 10-week internship program, I explored the exciting world of medicine through cutting-edge basic science and clinical research. I was fortunate to work alongside a prestigious staff of researchers and scientists to explore the causes of infertile couples. The scientific knowledge I gained at the Clinic enriched my understanding of the field.

It was very educational for me to be able to immerse myself in a research lab studying reproductive medicine. Through a lecture series, doctors presented their novel research findings to address current topics of human reproduction, infertility and sexual function. In addition to the lectures, each intern was assigned a mentor and research topic that he/she assisted on publication of articles and then presented his/her topic to the group.

I was also able to discover the intricacies of medical research with my mentor, Dr. Alex Varghese, through research and preparation for Dr. Varghese's publication and my presentation. During the first week of the internship, I was given several articles to read. I found these articles to be very difficult, because I lacked the basic biology knowledge to understand the terminology. However with help from my mentor, the staff, and other interns, I was able to use this obstacle as a catalyst toward my science training. I spent extra hours reading medical journals in order to develop my scientific vocabulary and tapped into my mentor's knowledge to understand these biological concepts. Through this process, I gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for on-going research and improvement of innovative health practices. At the end of the program, I was successfully able to present my topic *The In Vivo Environment Determining on Oocyte Competence and Embryo Quality* to the group. In recognition of my hard work, I received the "Award for succeeding through a difficult challenge" from Dr. Ashok Agarwal.

I also had the chance to participate in various training and shadow opportunities in the research lab, clinic, and operating rooms. I particularly remember observing Dr. Courtney Moore, a female urologist, and her fellows in the clinic. I was also able to observe her perform a reconstructive surgery in the operating room. She was very patient and explained the procedures, as though I was also a fellow. It was very interesting to not only learn about female urology but also observe the interaction between doctors and patients.

The interns selected to participate in the program represented numerous geographical locations within the US and worldwide. I appreciated the diversity of the group because I was also able to learn about new cultures, ideas, and interests from each participant. As a pilot program, the interns were able to suggest additions and changes to the program, which were well accepted. We were able to work with the program directors to really tailor the program to our various interests.

Although there were some difficulties arranging housing and transportation, since I was not from the Cleveland area, I believed my experience at the Clinic was well worth the effort. The Cleveland Clinic Center for Reproductive Medicine has an extraordinary intern program for outstanding college and medical students. I left the Clinic with a deeper understanding and appreciation for on-going research of innovative practices to improve reproductive medicine. I would recommend the Summer Internship Program to any student considering a career in medicine. I am grateful to have the opportunity to participate in this remarkable program.



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