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RE: 2008 Summer Internship Experience

My time spent at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation during the 2008 summer internship in the Center for Reproductive Medicine was a wonderful experience that exposed me to the world of medical research. Before attending the internship, I had very little experience in the field of biological research and knew next to nothing about reproductive medicine. Through the summer internship at the Center for Reproductive Medicine, I was able to immerse myself in the field and gain research technique and hands on practice. It was a very rewarding summer experience that I would not have had anywhere else.

My intern experience began with the distribution of informational reading on the topics of interest. I chose to focus primarily on female infertility issues; specifically, the problems associated with different techniques of cryopreservation of ovarian tissue and the benefits of different isolation techniques of primordial follicles. During my 12-week internship, I attended various lectures by many prestigious doctors from the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. These lectures were designed as a teaching mechanism for the summer interns; they provided insight into the breadth of reproductive medicine, and I am certain, based on my experience, that they encouraged the interns' interests in the field of reproductive medicine and research. I found these lectures to be wonderful.

During the first week of the internship, summer interns were paired with a mentor who would serve as a guide for developing our research articles. Each mentor presented their interns with information regarding the specific topics they were presently focusing on in their research, and the interns were asked to pick a topic of interest. Interns worked with their mentors to complete a research manuscript or review article with the hopes of having it published in a reproductive journal. Mentors helped the interns learn about their specific topics by presenting them with literature regarding their topics as well as by meeting with them regularly. Many interns successfully completed their articles, and were able to submit their drafts to a scientific journal for publication.

While many of the interns chose the route of writing an article, other interns had the opportunity to do hands-on research in the laboratory. My mentor, Dr. Amr Farouk M.D., and I worked together on a research project testing the different methods of primordial follicle isolation from porcine ovaries. Together, we harvested the ovaries,

and isolated the primordial follicles using mechanical and enzymatic techniques. It was such a great, hands-on learning experience.

At the end of the internship, each intern was asked to present a PowerPoint presentation on his or her work done during the term. The presentations were formally presented in front the entire staff in the Center for Reproductive Medicine, and were rated based on quality of the work as well as the esthetics of the presentation. The research opportunity and the presentations were very valuable experiences, and I still use my knowledge learned through my summer internship

The pilot program turned out to be a great success. It was interesting and practical; it challenged the interns to do their very best work in a cooperative environment. It provided practical experience and opportunities generally not available to undergraduate and medical students. It was a privilege to research an area of importance and to publish a journal article based on our research. It was also a wonderful reflection of the dedication, support, and perseverance of each of the mentors.

The internship program at the Cleveland Clinic Center for Reproductive Medicine provided each of its individual interns with an incredible learning experience. As a result of my experience, I have decided to pursue a career in research. Previously, I thought that the only path for me was a direct path to medical school. As a recent graduate from Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, IN with a Bachelors Degree in Biology, I am fortunate to be able to say that I have research experience as a result of my participation in the Center for Reproductive Medicine. I am very grateful to have had such a wonderful learning opportunity.

Sincerely,

Kathleen B. Fenner  
Saint Mary's College  
Class of 2009