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A Medical Student's Experience in the Dean's Summer Research Program

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A Medical Student's Experience in the Dean's Summer Research Program

During the summer of 2005, I participated in the General Medicine Summer Research Program, a research experience funded by the Office of the Dean at Jefferson Medical College (JMC). The program offers five students the opportunity to conduct ten-week research projects in diverse fields that might include dermatology, embryology, neurosciences, orthopedics, and radiation oncology. As one of these five students, I chose to work with Dr. David Nash in the Department of Health Policy. Under his guidance, I completed four projects that contribute to the Department's goal of improving the quality and safety of medical care, and thereby the health of the public. The experience offered me a unique perspective on policy issues that will my affect my career as a physician in the future.

For my first project, I developed a teaching agenda on current and future prospects for the safety of ambulatory medical care. This project sought to investigate issues of patient safety in the ambulatory setting that have yet to receive significant attention despite the Institute of Medicine's groundbreaking report *To Err is Human*. In conducting this research, I gained a profound understanding of a systems-oriented approach to analyzing medical errors. This type of analysis introduced me to a variety of developing strategies to improve the safety of ambulatory care, such as the implementation of electronic medical records and computerized physician order entry systems. This teaching agenda will serve as the basis for a presentation to the Jefferson University Physicians (JUP) Clinical Care Committee, the Jefferson medical group piloting several outpatient improvement projects.

Together with Jon Veloski, Director of Medical Education Research, in JMC's Center for Research in Medical Education and Health Care, I drafted a manuscript assessing whether third-year medical students' participation in the Department of Health Policy's 2005 Interclerkship Day changed their attitudes and beliefs related to medical errors and patient safety. Interclerkship Day is an annual, full-day program in the middle of students' third year that includes plenary speakers, a presentation by the Dean, and a choice of 2 of 9 afternoon workshops related to patient safety. This manuscript has been submitted for publication in a scholarly journal.

In addition, I created an annotated bibliography and wrote a book review. The annotated bibliography covered the last ten years' worth of literature specifically focused on practice-based learning and systems-based practice, the newest of the six Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education's (ACGME) core competencies. The bibliography should provide physicians and educators with a useful reference for teaching and evaluating these two core competencies. My book review examined *The Public Financing of Pharmaceuticals: An Economic Approach*, edited by Jaume Puig-Junoy. The review can be found in *PharmacoEconomics*.[1]

Furthermore, I gained greater insight into these and other policy issues by attending conferences with national thought leaders, including the Jefferson Industry Advisory Council, the Disease Management Colloquium, the 11th Annual Department of Health Policy Summer Seminar on Pay for Performance, and the Pennsylvania eHealth Technology Summit. I also sat in on JUP Clinical Care Committee and management update meetings within our own institution.

Overall, this program developed and expanded my understanding of current issues in health policy. The knowledge I have gained throughout this experience has further motivated me to become an effective leader in the medical field. I am fortunate that Jefferson Medical College is one of a few institutions to offer medical students hands-on experience in health policy, experience that all future physicians in our healthcare system should have.

References

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About the Author

Eric Moskowitz is a member of the Class of 2008 at Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University.