

Midpoint of My Neuroendocrine Research Internship

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As I am just passing the midpoint of my time with the Neuroendocrine Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital it excites me how much I learn and absorb through working within in the fast pace environment of a thriving hospital.

I am progressing smoothly through most of my learning objectives. I aimed to improve my laboratory skills, clinical skills, patient interaction, reporting skills, and data entry and analysis. I spend the majority of my time working in JMP sheets entering, proofing, and analyzing data for the study. This includes entering in the health history data of the subjects and updating it with new information each time the subject comes in for a visit along with surveys and questionnaires.

When I am not consumed in quantitative analysis I especially enjoy shadowing our nurse practitioner during subject visits. This allows me to gain experience with patient interaction as well as improve clinical skills. I sit in on physical and neurological examinations, CT scans, and bone density scans. With the subjects of the studies I am not certified to perform any clinical procedures but the phlebotomist has taught me how to take heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, perform pregnancy tests, and the basics of drawing blood.

My laboratory skills also have improved. I now can use the centrifuge to spin then aliquot blood into the proper corresponding tubes and distribute them to the different testing sites we use around the hospital. I hope to work more on reporting skills as I have not yet had to present any reports but will be doing so before I leave for the leading doctors and fellows. The learning objectives I created for this internship proved to be a helpful resource for both my supervisors and myself. They allow me to monitor my progress on the goals I set for myself.

I am proud of my contributions to the study I originally started out working on involving low dose testosterone treatments on depressed women, but also the help I have been able to give to the research coordinators of other studies. It has allowed me to expand my knowledge of both neuroscience and endocrinology through the various ongoing studies in the department which I have learned about and contributed to.

All the research coordinators in the department come from different academic backgrounds and all aspire to their own scholarly futures. Getting to know all of them and hearing their stories and opinions about useful experience for pre-medical students has been helpful for me. Before this internship I did not think I would like working in research or that would be something I would be before applying to medical school but now I will definitely want to apply for a position as some sort of research coordinator after college.