

Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Program 2005

Mentor: Mary-Margaret Chren, M.D., University of California at San Francisco

Mentorship Grant Recipient: Arlene C. Molino, M.D., M.P.H., University of Chicago Hospitals

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Through the Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Program I have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Mary-Margaret Chren at the University of California at San Francisco. During this time I was able to work within the health services research unit at the San Francisco VAMC, observe clinical subspecialty activities, and attend weekly dermatology grand rounds at the UCSF Medical Center. Collectively, these experiences have augmented my perception of the role of medical dermatology, and strengthened my desire to incorporate clinical research into my future practice as a dermatologist. I found Dr. Chren to be an ideal mentor, challenging me to examine research questions, and encouraging me to explore the variety of options available in the field of dermatology. In addition, she introduced me to several other subspecialty dermatologists at UCSF, who welcomed me into their clinics, and also shared the knowledge and insight they have gained in pursuit of their career goals.

At the health services research unit at the San Francisco VAMC, where Dr. Chren directs the Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP), I had the unique experience of working within a multidisciplinary research group consisting of MD and PhD scientists focused on improving the quality of health care. During research meetings, I was able to learn about ongoing projects in other health disciplines. Of particular value was the chance to see what challenges lie at various stages in the development of a research project, including the grant application process, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. I worked closely with Dr. Chren on the analysis of data from the Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer (NMSC) Cohort Study, an ongoing prospective study of patients diagnosed with NMSC from 1999 to 2000. My project examined the extent to which patient expectations were met in the care of nonmelanoma skin cancer in a private compared to a VAMC setting. During my mentorship month, I analyzed information from a database of 1375 eligible patients. Ultimately, 529 patients met the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study. To examine the research question I conducted both bivariate and multivariate analyses. I am currently preparing a manuscript with Dr. Chren, detailing the results of this study, for submission to the Archives of Dermatology.

This mentorship program has allowed me to work with dermatologists who strive to make positive and lasting contributions to the field of medical dermatology, and who compel innovation and incorporation of patient related outcomes research into the armamentarium of resources utilized to provide quality care to our patients. In addition, I feel that I have found a true mentor in Dr. Chren, who has shared her experiences thus far in her career, has inspired me to strive for my goals as a clinician and a researcher in dermatology, and has encouraged me to always enjoy life.