

2006 Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Award

Mentor: Lindy Fox, M.D; University of California at San Francisco

Mentee: Binh Ngo, M.D.

Dates: January 8-29, 2007

I am grateful for the generous support provided by the Medical Dermatology Society for me to spend 3 weeks at UCSF observing Dr. Lindy Fox on inpatient consultations. I first approached Dr. Fox after learning of her unique role as director of inpatient consultations at UCSF and rave reviews from her residents. Although I initially had problems with obtaining liability coverage while at UCSF due to lack of an institutional contract, Dr. Fox made it possible for me to spend the 3 weeks there, reassuring me that I would get the same experience as an observer.

While at UCSF, Dr. Fox involved me in different aspects of medical care delivery, both inpatient and outpatient. Dr. Fox has developed an inpatient dermatology service that focuses on skin signs of systemic diseases, solid organ transplant patients, HIV/AIDS patients, and unusual or exotic tropical infectious diseases. I was able to learn of Dr. Fox's approach to inpatient dermatology, including how to run an inpatient service, how the approach to inpatient dermatology differs from the typical outpatient practice, and how to balance inpatient dermatology with outpatient dermatology. Dr. Fox is an outstanding teacher and mentor, a great role model for residents, and an astute clinician who dedicates her passion in practicing medical dermatology. I have heard constant praises from her colleagues at UCSF at how she has defined the field of medical dermatology there and how valuable she is to the institution. Many other clinicians teach by authority, but Dr. Fox clearly leads by example.

I have learned a great deal from Dr. Fox in the art and science of medical dermatology. Her bedside manners exude warmth, confidence, and trust from patients. I was able to appreciate the complexities of inpatient consultations through Dr. Fox's encouragement to consider all possible differential diagnoses for a patient. Examples of patients and conditions encountered during my visit at UCSF include: systemic amyloidosis with possible POEMS syndrome, leukocytoclastic vasculitis secondary to infection, drugs, adult-onset Still's disease in a 13-year old, generalized Kaposi's sarcoma, subcutaneous sarcoidosis, scleroderma, new approaches to treating pressure urticaria and severe atopic dermatitis. She involved other medical specialties while on rounds and educated residents from other medical specialties during noon lectures. She instilled in us a devotion to searching the medical literature to find answers to important questions.

In addition to rounding on the consult service and working with Dr. Fox in her faculty practice, I was also able to rotate through specialty clinics such as Autoimmune Clinic (lupus, scleroderma, dermatomyositis), Resident Continuity Clinic (autoimmune blistering diseases, pruritis, patients on immunosuppressants), and the San Francisco General Hospital (indigent dermatology, HIV dermatology).

Dr. Fox always took time to make sure that I was getting the experience that I needed. She spent time discussing my career goals. At the conclusion of the three-week period in San Francisco, we agreed that the mentorship will continue, even though I will be back in my program in Los Angeles. We met again at the AAD Annual Meeting. I attended her lectures and heard her own former mentor praise her.

I have found this to be a valuable experience. I thank the Medical Dermatology Society for providing me with the opportunity to spend time with Dr. Fox. I am more than ever committed to pursuing medical dermatology. I am putting Dr. Fox's lessons into practice and strive to provide the quality of medical care on the inpatient service as she has taught me.