

Medical Derm Society Summary – rotation with Jeffrey Callen, MD
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My primary goal for participation in the mentorship program was to learn to better care for patients with a variety of simple and complex dermatoses. I spent the month of March, 2008 at the University of Louisville with Dr Jeffrey Callen. In summary, it was a great experience, not only in patient care, but also in the management of a private office setting and also of a residency program. I participated in the care of complex medical dermatology patients and therefore the rotation was a success. However, my time in Louisville was more of a rotation than a mentorship because Dr Callen is very busy and did not have the time for mentorship.

Clinic time with Dr Callen was fast-paced, learn as you go. It was clear that his primary goal is patient care. With his limited clinic time due to a multitude of other academic-related activities, he had to move quickly to see his normal follow up visits as well as new referral patients. The pace of the clinic was advantageous in that it allowed me to see a great volume of complex patients. Most of his patients suffer from systemic disease and are actively treated with systemic medications. From these patients I was able to observe and learn how Dr Callen utilizes various drugs as well as his overall approach to systemic disease. In addition, there were subtle clues as to how to run such a fast-paced clinic in a private and academic setting.

However, in some ways it would have been advantageous for me if things had been slower. Each patient was remarkably complex and often there was insufficient time to discuss why things were being done just as they were. I was encouraged to write down questions during the clinic for discussion afterwards, but I am sure that I missed many important teaching points.

My rotation was further compromised by the fact that Dr Callen is a frequent lecturer and traveler. In addition, he serves several important roles in the Dermatology community that are outside his clinical practice. The result of this is that he was in clinic on only 50% of the days I spent at the University of Louisville. In summary, he simply didn't have the time to be a mentor during my month in Louisville. To would-be rotators, I would suggest working with his schedule to find a time when he would be present for as much of the rotation as possible. For me, I wanted a winter rotation, and so my choice of months was limited. I certainly could have rotated with someone who does not travel as much, or who has more dedicated clinic time, but it was impossible to know until after the fact.

Since Dr Callen was not always available, I spent considerable time with Mark Jackson, MD, who is in private practice a few blocks from the hospital. I spent almost as much time with Dr Jackson as with Dr Callen and I learned about a number of things working with him. First, Dr Jackson's practice was also fast-paced, and I saw a number of complex and interesting Dermatology patients on systemic medications. We also saw a number of routine Dermatologic conditions, but even these cases allowed me to learn something. In addition, Dr Jackson is heavily involved in clinical research, which he allowed me to observe as well. Although I don't plan to do clinical research, I was glad to have the opportunity to see this first hand. Unlike Dr Callen, Dr Jackson taught me many clinical pearls and engaged me in discussions on diagnosis and treatment of many

medical dermatologic issues. In addition, we had several encounters where the psychosocial aspect of care came to the forefront of the visit, and we spent considerable time on these issues as well. Lastly, he taught me about how he runs his office. He discussed workflow and personnel issues that may be very important to me after residency. I was very pleased to have met and worked with Dr Jackson, who ended up being a very large part of the rotation in Louisville.

I spent some time with other attendings while on rotation, but they did not contribute significantly to the overall rotation.

In summary, the MDS scholarship gave me the opportunity to have a very useful and educational rotation. Although I would change several things given the opportunity, I am very satisfied with the rotation and I am thankful I had the chance to participate in the MDS. I am sure I will keep contact with Drs Callen and Jackson in the future.