

June 30, 2008

Dear Medical Dermatological Society Mentorship Program,

I would like to thank the Medical Dermatological Society Mentorship Program for the opportunity to spend four weeks at Stanford University with Dr. David Fiorentino. Dr. Fiorentino runs a multidisciplinary clinic with Dr. Lorinda Chung, a rheumatologist at the same institution. Together, they see complex medical patients with difficult diagnoses and management issues. This was unique to me, as my institution did not have this type of clinic. The team approach allowed the patient to be seen concurrently by the rheumatology fellow and dermatology resident first. Ample time was allowed to evaluate the patient, a refreshing change from a rushed general dermatology clinic where only fifteen minutes might be allotted per patient. After the entire team returned to speak to the patient, extensive discussion of the disease, diagnosis and management ensued. Through these clinics, I saw dermatomyositis, systemic lupus erythematosus, scleroderma and many other connective tissue diseases in different stages of management from initial diagnosis and work-up to difficult to manage diseases and discussion of clinical trials when conventional therapies were failing.

Concurrently in the dermatology-rheumatology clinic, clinical information was collected prospectively during the clinic, as part of a larger database. Observing how clinical research was incorporated in daily patient care was also a helpful experience to witness. In addition I was also able to spend time with the medical dermatology clinical trial fellow where I was familiarized with the various clinical trials for patients with connective tissue diseases. I was also given the opportunity to help add to a patient database by helping to do chart reviews of patients with dermatomyositis. This was a valuable experience because I was able to follow individual patients' course of disease that would sometimes span over 10 years. I was able to see the difficult challenges in management and the multiple courses of medications required to control the disease and the potential complications.

Stanford is an excellent dermatology department and I took advantage of another unique opportunity, the cutaneous oncology clinic, headed by the well-respected Dr. Youn Kim. This was also a multidisciplinary clinic attended by a dermatologist, radiation oncologist, medical oncologist and dermatopathologist. This was an intensive clinic that gave excellent care to patients who often travelled very far to see Dr. Kim's advice and treatment suggestions. Not only did I see many cutaneous T cell lymphomas, I also saw many B-cell lymphoma patients that I did not see at my home institution. Again, the multidisciplinary approach and the interactions between all the disciplines was fantastic.

I left Stanford with a renewed sense of how I would become a medical dermatologist because of the generous time Drs. Fiorentino and Kim gave in terms of allowing me to attend their clinic and their advice on the various paths available in medical dermatology. They were both inspiring and set an example of what the ideal medical dermatologist should be.



Department of Dermatology
Sincerely,

Julie Lin

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