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2015 Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Award Experience

The MDS Mentorship award provided me with the inspiring experience to work under the guidance of Dr. Arturo Saavedra at Massachusetts General Hospital. Even prior to starting the rotation, Dr. Saavedra took all measures to ensure that I received the most out of my time. The outstanding staff of MGH Dermatology assisted me with the process of getting a Massachusetts limited license, along with MGH physician credentialing and access, prior to my arrival. This allowed me to actively participate in all elements of patient-care, with complete access to view and write notes in electronic medical records; hence, I was never limited to being a mere observer during the entirety of my experience.

While at MGH, I rotated through several services, which were tailored by Dr. Saavedra to provide me with a unique and optimal mentorship experience. I spent the majority of my time working directly with Dr. Saavedra in his Graft versus Host Disease (GvHD) and complex medical dermatology clinics. This experience served to substantially increase my understanding of GvHD and allowed me to appreciate the profound burdens that this illness imposes on affected patients. In particular, I appreciated the therapeutic challenges associated with the sclerodermoid variant of chronic cutaneous GvHD, which is often corticosteroid-refractory. I also learned a great deal about the most innovative treatments and clinical trials available, including extracorporeal photophoresis, brentuximab and low-dose IL-2. In addition to his clinical practice, I worked with Dr. Saavedra directly in his dermatopathology service, which also served to be an outstanding educational opportunity. Dr. Saavedra's reputation as an extraordinary clinician and teacher preceded him. After this experience, I can attest that he is truly one of a kind and among the most gifted academic physicians in the field. He also happens to be one of the most gracious and humble people I have met. I consider myself privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from him and have him as a mentor.

During my rotation at MGH, I also periodically worked with Dr. Daniela Kroshinsky in the in-patient consultation service and Dr. Hensin Tsao in the Melanoma and Pigmented Lesions Clinic. I found both of these experiences to be of immense educational value as well.

I am sincerely grateful to the Medical Dermatology Society for providing me with this wonderful opportunity, which contributed significantly to my professional and personal growth. I am looking forward to incorporating the invaluable knowledge and insights that I gained through this experience in to my career in academic dermatology.