

Niku Tabatabai

Mr. Speice

Independent Study and Mentorship- 3A

26 January 2018

We're On a Timeline

Mentor Visit Assessment #1

Mentor: Dr. Marius Meintjes

Profession: Reproductive Endocrinologist

Location: Frisco Institute of Reproductive Medicine, 8380 Warren Pkwy #201, Frisco, TX
75034

Date: 23 January 2018

Time: 1:30pm- 3:20pm

Assessment:

Although a large portion of my mentor visit consisted of me printing out patient records, the entire experience provided me with much more clarity on the direction my mentorship and final product is headed. Prior to walking into the office, I was sure that this mentor visit would be the start of my final product. The last time I had met with Dr. Meintjes consisted of an overview of the entire research project. However, this time I was able to print out the over 80 patient embryo records that we are going to use for our overall final product data.

Coming into this mentor visit I was expecting some exciting and involved research to begin. While quite involved, the truth is that the process of conducting research and analyzing data is not always exciting. A great deal of logistics goes into just finding the information

needed. Therefore, while printing out all of the records I recognized the need for this task. The next step, which utilizes the papers I printed out, require me to go through all of the records and enter everything into an excel sheet. This will look at the number of normal and abnormal embryos when comparing them at five days and six days. Furthermore, Dr. Meintjes informed me that he will be providing me with access to the secure online database used by him and his colleagues to look at physician records. Through this we will be able to see which doctors are having the most and least success, which we will follow through with by analyzing the reason why some physicians have lower success rates. Dr. Meintjes predicts that one doctor may be giving too much triggering medicine prior to implantation, which may be corresponding to lower pregnancy rates than previously shown.

All of this information that Dr. Meintjes presented to me was quite shocking in many ways, for I never imagined conducting such an official research project on something that could increase the productivity of the very facility I mentor at. This aspect is what makes our upcoming research so exciting. As I was printing the records I began reading through them and noticed many abnormal embryos, and many patients had nothing but abnormal embryos. The mere thought of being able to improve those statistics has started to give me even more motivation to keep on track with my mentor visits and research deadlines. Not only will this research project allow me to create a challenging final product, but it will introduce me to the world of research and academic journal writing. One of the main factors I have looked at in colleges is a strong research program and department of those going into the science fields. The exposure I am receiving now will give me a leg up once I enter college and make me feel more confident about quickly beginning future research.

One concern that I have is the tight schedule I am currently facing to balance all of my commitments. The abstract for my research must be completed by the end of April, which means the end of March is when I must finish entering in data and analyzing everything with Dr. Meintjes. This tight deadline means that consistent mentor visits must be made and multiple days a week may be necessary. Fortunately, once Dr. Meintjes shows me how to work the database, I will be able to come in whenever I can and work independently on a computer. Another worry that has crossed my mind many times is the fact that Dr. Meintjes has submitted hundreds of abstracts and has had almost every single one accepted. That places an immense amount of pressure on my shoulders. Will I be able to deliver? Will Dr. Meintjes regret entrusting me with a research project he was going to do on his own? Although these concerns are quite prevalent in my mind, Dr. Meintjes has assured me numerous times that he will assist me throughout the entire process and make sure I stay to his expected level.

Overall, the experience and exposure I am currently receiving to the field of academic research is unlike anything I have ever done in school or in ISM last year. I told myself that my main goal for this year was to venture out and step outside of my comfort zone, which is where I remained, for the most part, last year. I am tremendously proud of myself for how far I have come and so grateful to have found Dr. Meintjes, who has dedicated so much of his time to help a high school student grow and succeed. The next steps I must take to finish my final product is the begin going through the secure database at the office. The most incredible part of this mentorship is the fact that my timeline for completing this entire research journey far exceeds the end of ISM, which signals to me that I have truly made the best out of my entire ISM 2 experience.