

MEDICAL STUDENT RESEARCH

The Medical College of Georgia Medical Scholars Program offers the opportunity for medical students in good academic standing to engage in research activities in close mentorship with faculty who are nationally and internationally distinguished scientists, clinicians, and academic scholars. In the past year, 19 medical students have been involved in research working across every departmental subspecialty. These students are vital assets, assisting our faculty in ongoing projects and further developing their research skills. There are currently 26 ongoing research projects in the department. So far in 2020 four medical students have assisted the Department Chair and his Fellows in their current research, producing two oral presentations, four poster presentations, and three peer reviewed articles and counting!

Student Research Experience



Jacob Eskew, MSY-2
Medical College of Georgia

Over the summer, I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Kountakis and fellows Dr. Makary and Dr. Ryan through the Medical Scholars Program. I specifically analyzed the correlation of post-operative outcomes and anatomic variations in the attachment of the superior uncinate process. After completing basic science research at UGA, this was my first experience with clinical research. Compiling real patient data and analyzing real post-operative outcomes was a very enjoyable experience. During the pandemic when medical students were very constrained in what they could do, research with Dr. Kountakis provided a means to make an impact in real patients' lives. I learned a lot about writing abstracts, analyzing data, running statistics, but I think more than anything, I learned the importance of clinical research in the lives of the patients the research will benefit.



Lauren Reid MSY-4
Medical College of Georgia

I have had the privilege of working with several faculty members in the department on a variety of interesting projects. I am currently working with Dr. Seyyedi, as well as fellow students, Chris Parnell and Kush Patel, on a project investigating one of the most common complaints seen in the neurotology clinic: dizziness. We are using retrospective chart review to establish how many patients complaining of dizziness are eventually diagnosed with vestibular migraine and how effective treatment is for these patients. It has been very rewarding to learn more about the nuances of vestibular migraine diagnosis and treatment when this is such a prevalent and often debilitating diagnosis for patients. I believe some of the best things about working with the department as a student interested in otolaryngology are the variety and availability of research opportunities. From case reports to large-scale reviews, there is always something to get involved in. The residents and faculty are very supportive of student interest in research.

MEDICAL STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE CONTINUED



Jonathon Rast, MSY-2
Medical College of Georgia

I had the opportunity to work on two research projects with Dr. Seyyedi this year. In the first project, we are comparing the prevalence of migraine headaches in the Augusta University Otolaryngology Clinic with the general population. Many people that suffer from migraines remain undiagnosed for various reasons. One reason is that many migraineurs may have unusual symptoms or an atypical presentation, making it tougher for clinicians to accurately diagnose. Since some abnormal migraine presentations can present with otolaryngologic complaints, we suspect that we will find a higher prevalence of migraineurs in our clinic than in the general population. In the second project, we want to study the relationship between inner ear trauma caused by cochlear implantation and changes in the levels of certain inner ear proteins. Cochlear implantation restores hearing to many patients every year, but unfortunately, the procedure can cause trauma to the inner ear, triggering inflammatory processes that can deteriorate some of the hearing improvements in the following postoperative weeks.

We believe that certain inner ear proteins may serve as valuable biomarkers of this trauma, indicating if a patient could benefit from anti-inflammatory therapy to mitigate any postoperative hearing loss. This experience has been an incredible opportunity to learn a lot about otology and about medical research overall. Transitioning from my basic science chemistry research in undergrad, I had a lot to learn about clinical research, and Dr. Seyyedi was a great leader, teacher, and mentor for me throughout the process. While learning some of the fundamentals of otology in order to understand the research and write proposals, I felt like my scientific curiosity was reignited. The curiosity, creativity, and innovation required for creating research projects gave me a great feeling of satisfaction.

ARE YOU A STUDENT INTERESTED IN OTOLARYNGOLOGY RESEARCH?

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