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Throughout this summer, my involvement with the AT Still Research Institute has provided me with invaluable research experience that will surely be useful for future research endeavors both during my undergraduate studies as well as medical school and beyond. Overall, the experience has been very rewarding, for several reasons.

Having had no prior research experience, I went into the program not quite knowing what to expect - the aspect of engaging in research at a medical school seemed slightly daunting. However, my fears were alleviated the first day I set in. The staff and researchers were very friendly and very accommodating - always providing excellent introduction and instructions. First, receiving a tour of the facility and having the opportunity to discuss its current research projects and goals was a great way to ease into things. Having a clear view of what projects were being worked on, in addition to their aim, really helped me to get a clear view of where things were headed. Additionally, I was given excellent tutorials for every task I performed.

My work covered several different areas - allowing me to gain exposure to research protocols, scientific writing, terminology and data analysis. My first involvement was with the 2-D and 3-D camera measurement systems. I learned how to calibrate them, as well as how to take pictures. One of my peers and I had the opportunity to revise the manual of procedure for the 2-D reliability study. Having the opportunity to directly provide feedback to the research really made me feel like a part of the team.

I was able to process a chunk of the data myself for the 2-D system - contributing directly to the data pool. Briefly, I was exposed to the more complex methods of data processing for the 3-D camera system - analyzing the results and comparing them to the examiners findings, with the help of several software programs. This gave me a glimpse into another facet of the ongoing research at the institution, helping to broaden my perspective of the diversity of research occurring. Literature searching was also helpful for keeping current with today's medical research.

My work with the incoming student diagnostic examination was rewarding in several aspects. First of all, I learned medical terminology associated with the relevant pelvic anatomy - terms such as inferior, superior, supine, prone, as well as landmarks, such as the iliac crest. Secondly, it was thought provoking. Several different aspects of incoming students were assessed to analyze what effect they had on palpation skill. My research focused primarily on enhancing our survey to better assess students' vision, helping to possibly give further insight on how that may affect students' skills. With that, as well as hands-on experience with palpation, I learned a lot about the process of palpation itself.

This insight was useful not only at face value, but also for increasing my understanding of the philosophy of osteopathic medicine, and what separates it from allopathic medicine. This information alone would have made the experience invaluable. Everyday exposure to the osteopathic field was definitely not an experience that I could obtain at just any institution.

This summer has been amazing. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to do research here, and am very intent on continuing throughout my undergraduate studies. This institution truly values research and is very committed to broadening the evidence base for osteopathic medicine.

