

Justine Renneker

Flushing Hospital Medical Center – Self Reflection

May 14, 2016

This semester I was granted the opportunity to intern at Flushing Hospital Medical Center. I feel honored to have been given the chance to observe and practice in a hospital setting. This experience helped me to excel in my field, as well as gain insight on different cases, from members of the dental team.

On my first day, I was sure to walk in and display confidence in my skill and capability of treating patients. I performed thorough medical history interviews, and asked questions when I seen red flags. I wanted to ensure the staff that I was knowledgeable. I believe this confidence helped me to establish good rapport with the office manager, residents, and attendants. They would include me on discussions, and ask for my opinion regarding the status of a patient's oral condition.

The internship gave me the room to explore my own abilities. I was taking the radiographs, and providing detailed evaluations to the dentist. I found that the radiograph interpretations in school taught me to be very thorough when looking for caries, bone loss, and PAP. The dentist were always impressed when I acknowledged an issue that was not prominent on the radiographs. One case in particular, my knowledge proved to be very helpful. I was asked to perform a routine prophylaxis on a 22 year old male. The patient's chief complaint was his a partially erupted premolar. He stated that he could feel the tooth in his jaw. Many red flags caught my attention. Upon review of the panoramic radiograph, I noticed a PAP that was just beginning to eat at the inferior border of the mandible. A referral was immediately made to the oral surgeon.

Working in the clinic differed from school clinic in several ways. Although I was working beneath the supervision of a dentist, my work was not being thoroughly reviewed. I worked independently as a health care provider. During one of my medical history interviews with a patient, I noticed the patient recorded having TB in 2013. I began to ask the patient further questions before I decided to perform treatment. I think what startled me the most is that the resident looked shock when I mentioned it. She had seen the patient previously, and never noticed the medical history before. The patient did state that she had taken the medication for several months, and was asymptomatic the day of. I continued with treatment as I had been taught. At that moment, I think the realization of being an independent provider set in. I was to make judgment calls that required in depth medical knowledge. The hospital aslo placed me in a position to see multiple patients within four hours, opposed to the 1 patient I see in four hours at school. At first I was a little nervous and worked a little slower than they would have liked. In time, I gained momentum, and was able to keep up with the pace of the office. I had to teach myself that although a patient requires an SRP, a separate time was to be scheduled, so that the proper appointment time would be allocated. In school, we do scaling and root planing for every

patient. In the hospital, patients first received a prophylaxis, and if an SRP was required, they were scheduled on another day.

Practicing in the hospital setting allowed me to witness the care for a variety of different patients. I observed, but never worked on, patients that were sent down from the psychiatric department. I was able to see the interaction amongst clinician and patient, ways to handle the treatment, and the level of patience required. I learned with a more agitated patient, treatment is done to the best of your ability, but nothing was forced. Conversation was very brief, and the language used was similar to speaking with a child. Observing these scenarios prepared me for handling the situation in private practice. It helps when you are able to witness cases in real life, opposed to the textbook routine we learn.

Observation was a key highlight of this internship, it enhanced a lot of the things I already practiced in clinic. I also believe, I grew a lot as a clinician, simply by speaking with the residents and attendants. They were very kind and helpful, always ready to give advice. Everytime a complicated case presented they discussed it as a team.

This experience has taught me an abundance of useful skills. It granted me the opportunity to participate as a practicing dental hygienist, and utilize all the skills my education at NYCCT has provided me. I believe it helped to exceed in patient management, time management, instrumentation, and operating as a dental team member. Self confidence was certainly an added benefit from this experience. I feel I am able to walk into my first job better prepared, because I have already worked on my own in the field. School clinic is very educational, but I think we all feel the security of having our professors to guide us. I am honored to have been rewarded the opportunity to participate in this internship. I hope to find a practice that will allow me to utilize my skills to their full potential, and be a member of a team, similar to my former team at Flushing Hospital Medical Center.