Enhancing your medical education through research: an overview of the MD-STIR program

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June 20, 2017
What is the MD STIR program?

- A program that provides a structured research experience
- Composed of research component that spans 2 summers (24 weeks total, or roughly 3 months each summer)
- Written component
  - Written proposal (application)
  - Final report
- Oral presentation
  - One presentation organized by your research group
  - One presentation to the MD STIR Research Committee
- Oral Defense
- Receive an MD with Special Training in Research notation on your transcript and degree
Will this make you a better doctor?

- Helps you develop distinct and recognized skill sets
- Skills in research, writing, presentation, communication and critical thinking
- Helps you develop lateral thinking skills, independence and confidence
- Helps you understand research developments that may enhance your clinical practice
MD with STIR timeline

- Summer Research 1
  - Feb 1: Submit Application
  - Receive Committee feedback
- Summer Research 2
  - Attend Ethics Seminar
  - Oral Seminar
- Sept.: Submit Final report
- Oct./Nov.: Final oral report
- Final Committee Decision
• Summer 1—Work in a research lab

• Fall—Find a Supervisor for Summer research 2

• Feb 1—Submit MD with STIR Application
  – Research proposal
  – Confidential appraisal from past Supervisor
  – Application is assessed by Committee and constructive feedback given to student
• **Summer 2**—Work in a research lab
  
  – Attend Research ethics and Integrity Seminar
  
  – Student presents an oral presentation to department or research group

• **Sept**—Submit final report (6 pages, dbl-spaced)
  
  – Abstract/Introduction/Results/Discussion/References
  
  – Contribution to Research Report (1 page, dbl-spaced)

• **Oct/Nov**—Oral presentation and defense
• What is the advantage of enrolling in this program since I already have summer research experience?

  – *This is an opportunity to take your research to “the next level”*
  – → submit a research proposal
    • Under the guidance of your Supervisor, you will write up a research proposal that you wish to do in the following summer (driver/passenger)
    • Receive constructive feedback from the MD STIR committee (composed of accomplished scientific researchers from all fields)
    • An opportunity for you to improve your writing skills
  – → work in a research lab for another summer
    • This is now YOUR project (motivated to learn from team members, propose methodology or analytical improvements etc.)
  – → write up your final data in a research report
    • By writing a formal report, you really get to “know your study”.
  – → give an oral presentation and defend your data
    • An opportunity to test your presentation and critical thinking skills and receive constructive feedback from a panel of experts
Comments from former MD STIR students

• The program benefits clinical training and development
  – Practice with verbal and written communication
  – Learning to be a medical expert in one area
  – Practice searching research medical databases for new research

• The best part of the program was getting to officially take part in research during medical school.
  – The program allowed me to take a larger role in performing a research project that I many not have had without the program’s endorsement

• My research experience helped me develop research skills, technology development skills, complex problem solving skills and it gave me multiple awesome interpersonal relationships with my research colleagues
Words of wisdom from The Matrix:

Sooner or later you’re gonna realize, just like I did...

There's a difference between knowing the path and walking the path.

- [https://www.med.ualberta.ca/programs/mdstir](https://www.med.ualberta.ca/programs/mdstir)
- Summer job database, [https://www.ualberta.ca/medicine/research/studentships/job](https://www.ualberta.ca/medicine/research/studentships/job)
- AIHS Summer studentships, [http://www.uri.ualberta.ca/ApplyForFunding/AIHSSummerStudentships.aspx](http://www.uri.ualberta.ca/ApplyForFunding/AIHSSummerStudentships.aspx)