

Research Assessment #1

Date: 2 September 2017

Subject: Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgery

MLA Citation: System, Mount Sinai Health. "A Brighter Future For Babies With Heart Defects." *The Huffington Post*, TheHuffingtonPost.com, 30 Aug. 2017, www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-brighter-future-for-babies-with-heart-defects_us_59a6bf47e4b0d81379a81c72.

Assessment:

Since finalizing my career of study for this year, cardiovascular surgery, I am left with one question: pediatrics or geriatrics? I am firm in my desire to help people by using healthcare as my tool. However, a final question for myself is: upon which age group I should focus? This article, focusing on the cardiac health of infants and children, helped me gain some insight as to whether pediatrics would suit me. Although the article is more simplistic than I would have liked, the more complicated and vocabulary dense articles I came across were too difficult for me to understand with my limited knowledge of cardiology-specific terminology. Hopefully, throughout the course of this year, I will vastly expand upon my knowledge concerning the heart.

"A Brighter Future For Babies With Heart Defects" is an article told from the perspective of Peter Pastuszko, Chief of Pediatric Surgery at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. Dr. Pastuszko briefly discusses the detection of heart problems, severity of defects, and understanding of heart procedures before providing an anecdote about how he largely impacted a child's life at the end.

One of the first points I took from this paper was the fact that cardiologists are often needed during the course of a pregnancy as well as after birth. This means that the doctor is dealing with two patients at once instead of just one. The introduction of mother/fetus cases also proposes the concept that in pediatrics, the patient is a minor and everything must be done and communicated with the guardians/parents of the patient. Because the article does not mention the issues concerning communication between doctor and guardian - should I pursue pediatrics - this would be an important concept I would need to grasp due to its large presence in pediatric healthcare.

Another concept introduced to me by this article is the vast difference between pediatric heart problems and geriatric heart problems. While geriatric heart issues usually stem from their lifestyle, pediatric defects most commonly concern poor oxygenation or structural dysfunctions formed in the womb. Some examples of heart

defects seen in infants are holes in the heart, tetralogy of Fallot, and HLHS (Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome). Even though these examples cover a wide range of severity, they are unique to only infants and children. This idea presents another major difference in the healthcare between pediatrics and geriatrics, aiding in my decision between the two.

Last but not least, the part of the article that caught my eye the most was the anecdote that Dr. Pastuszko included at the end. He explains how, 10 years after performing a very complex heart surgery on a baby, the same boy visits him in his new location. Over lunch, the boy tells him about his many accomplishments, including winning a national engineering competition and meeting the president of the United States. This story and others like it are the reason I would want to pursue pediatric cardiovascular surgery.

Now that my heart has been warmed and my eyes have been opened to pediatric healthcare, I hope to have the opportunity to interview possible mentors in that particular field as well as surgeons dealing with adults. Whether I choose pediatrics or not, I hope my mentor can supply me with the best learning experience possible and introduce me to the amazing medical world.