Introduction
• Rutgers CINJ Cancer Prevention and Control Research aims to:
  • Develop and implement interventions to assess and reduce populations’ risk of developing certain cancer
  • Improve survivorship outcomes and experiences

Objective of Internship
This internship provided the opportunity to assist with behavioral research, primarily focusing on skin cancer, at all developmental time points. Thus, I experienced the “lifecycle” of a study’s implementation, from pilot research to literature publication.

Work profile
• Performed literature searches and review, including assisting in a peer review process.
• Conducted one-on-one phone calls with participants in the recruitment process.
• Designed messaging used in online social media campaigns and interventions.
• Conducted quality assurance checks for both qualitative and quantitative data.

Reflection
• As New Jersey’s only nationally designated comprehensive cancer center, Rutgers CINJ fulfills a desperately needed role in providing interventions to reduce cancer risk across New Jersey and the entire country.
• Rutgers CINJ Cancer Prevention and Control researchers publish the strategy, design, and outcomes of various interventions, often focusing on skin cancer.
• Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, yet it is often entirely preventable. Thus, there is a great need for interventions that help individuals realize their own risk and develop healthy habits to combat this risk.
• Interventions administered range from specialized Facebook groups, to individually-tailored website modules, to partner-based education and goal setting.
• I was able to observe the “lifecycle” of this research, as I was given the opportunity to participate on several different studies, all in different developmental stages.
• In some instances, I was involved in brainstorming the logistics of pilot studies. Other days, I assisted in participant recruitment, administered follow-up calls with patients with a past history of skin cancer, conducted quality assurance checks of quantitative and qualitative data, and designed educational messaging for social media campaigns and online interventions.

Looking ahead
I hope to attend medical school and become a pediatric oncologist. The communication skills and principles of sensitivity to patient experience I gained this summer will not only assist me in completing my goal but will also benefit my future patients.

Questions
• How can researchers better combat individuals’ indifference towards sun protection in favor of appearance (i.e. developing tans) in order to develop sustained healthy habits?
• How can interventions be designed to be even more individualized yet retain the ability to produce generalizable results?

Conclusion
• Rutgers CINJ Cancer Prevention and Control research is holistic in their approach to cancer research, intervening both before cancer development and after treatment to reduce one’s risk.

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