

I came to the **Neurosurgical Simulation Research and Training Center** between **June** and **August** of **2014** (3 months). After having an amazing experience - in terms of academia, research and learning – the year before, I was invited by Prof. Del Maestro to come to the NeuroSim Lab for a second stint.

In the center, I enjoyed and benefited from reuniting and collaborating with neurosurgical residents, fellow medical students, biomedical and mechanical engineers, and world-class staff neurosurgeons (like Prof. Del Maestro). The discussions held at the lab were very enriching as they reflected various backgrounds, cultures and experiences. We had people from Canada, Lebanon, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Pakistan, England and Iran. The lab was a model united nations in terms of openness, warm-heartedness, togetherness and academic efficiency. I made friendships that will last a lifetime.

This year, Prof. Del Maestro gave me more of a leading role in the team. My experience from last year helped me assume more responsibilities this time around. I was assigned a project by Prof. Del Maestro dealing with the impact of acute stress on neurosurgical performance using the NeuroTouch. I was able to work with great researchers like Dr. Alexander Winkler-Schwartz and Dr. Khalid Bajunaid amongst others. I was capable to have my name put on many papers produced and continue to be produced by the center.

As new scenarios have been installed on the NeuroTouch, I practiced and trained my psychomotor and surgical skills on the neurosurgical simulation machines and prototypes that we possess in the center daily!

In addition to my time in the NeuroSim Lab, I was capable of assuming two observerships in the Epilepsy Unit at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital, and the Pediatric Neurosurgery Service in the Montreal Children’s Hospital. I have been able to attend clinic hours, surgeries, departmental meetings, case discussions, Neurology Grand rounds and Neurosurgery Grand Rounds every week. I have also been able to attend simulation consortiums at the National Research Council, the Neurology Research Day and the Neurosurgery Research Day too. In addition, I participated in the ongoing research at the epilepsy unit and shadowed renowned pediatric neurosurgeons like Prof. Montez and Prof. Farmer at the Montreal Children’s Hospital. Both of these great professors wrote me resounding recommendations to boost my future career in neurosurgery.

This time around, the NeuroSim Lab helped me develop my leadership qualities, my research techniques, and my psychomotor skills. I am very proud and greatly thankful to Dr. Del Maestro for believing in me and for handing me these opportunities. He is a fatherly figure to me and a role model that I aspire to emulate in my career as a neurosurgeon, as a researcher, and as a person.

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