



# Texas Children's Hospital Visiting Scholars Program

Ma. Theresa Collante, Pediatric Rheumatology Fellow, UST Hospital

## Texas Children's Hospital®



### Getting to know TCH

For the year 2015–2016, Texas Children's Hospital (TCH), located in Houston, Texas, was voted as one of the best children's hospitals in the United States. TCH is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to create a healthier future for children and women by leading in **patient care, education, and research.** Built in 1954, TCH has spent the last 60 years providing health and hope to children and their families. And at present, TCH is an outstanding workplace and has excellent nurses and the best doctors.



Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) is a premier health sciences university in Houston and has been affiliated with TCH since the 1950's.

It is a great privilege for me to be able to visit and observe at TCH and BCM, where my very own mentor, Dr. Christine Bernal, Chief of Section and Training Officer of the Section of Pediatric Rheumatology UST Hospital, trained to be a pediatric rheumatologist, and be supervised by her mentor, Dr. Marietta De Guzman, Clinic Chief of the TCH Rheumatology Clinic and Associate Professor at BCM Pediatrics.



### --Visiting Scholars Program--

#### Observership 101: The Basics

Observership started with checking-in on a sunny but rainy Houston morning. For TCH, I went to Claudia Smith, International Services Project Analyst, at the Abercrombie Building of TCH. This building is home to International Services, Nursing Operations, Security Services, Auxiliary and Volunteer Services, and Pathology. For BCM, I checked in with Stacey Cheung, Immigration Representative of BCM, at the BCM McGovern Campus. Stacey and Claudia were in constant communication with me during my application period. I secured two badges, underwent an occupational health check from Baylor Clinic, and made sure I understood the rules and had the proper medical insurance.

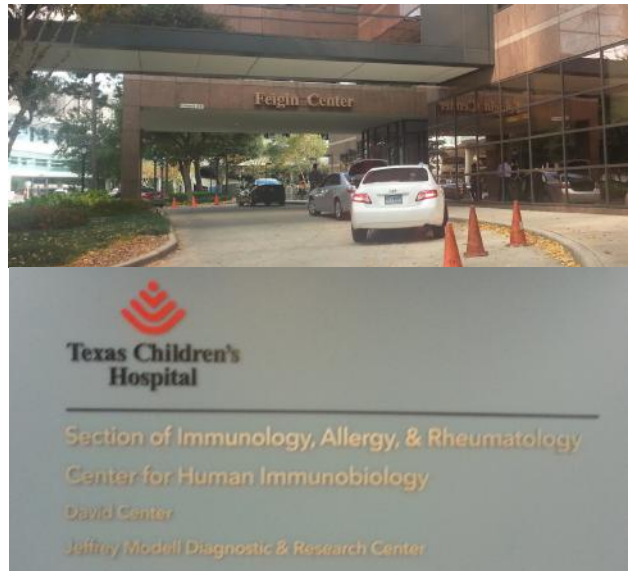


**Visitor Observer Agreement:** This serves to acknowledge that the above individual has been invited to be a Visitor Observer in the Department indicated during the period specified within BCM affiliated facilities. We understand the activity is observation-only and will ensure the compliance of the Visitor Observer. The Visitor Observer may attend rounds, observe an attending physician and participate in conferences or teaching seminars. The Visitor Observer will not engage in research of any sort, will not enter Baylor laboratories and will have no hands-on patient contact. The Visitor Observer must accept responsibility for his/her own financial support and will maintain BCM health insurance coverage (for themselves and any dependents) while observing with Baylor. Failure to do so may cause immediate dismissal from the program. All parties involved accept full responsibility to identify and introduce the Visitor Observer to healthcare personnel, any relief attending, house staff or students in each healthcare area in order to distinguish the permissible activities. We understand that there will be no written certification issued, or letters of recommendation to the Visitor Observer as a result of the visit. **All signatures above signify acceptance of these terms.**



Abercrombie Building Lobby, TCH

Checked-in and eligible to enter the hospital premises, I met Luis Paxtor, Administrative Coordinator of the Section of Immunology, Allergy, & Rheumatology. The section is located at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Feigin Center, a 20-story building which serves as the hub for pediatric research in microbiology, immunology, cell biology, and sciences of infection and inflammation. Luis gave me an orientation regarding my schedule and showed me the offices, conference rooms, and clinics that I will be rotating in. He also introduced me to the staff and fellows of the section.



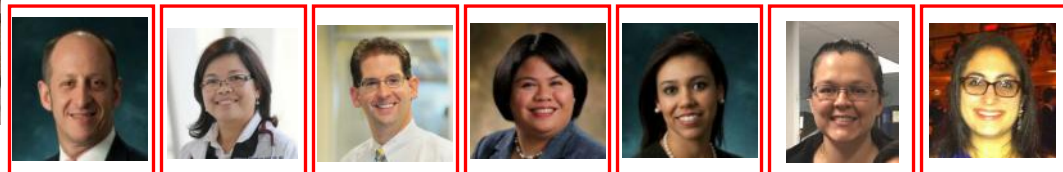
**TCH . A WHOLE NEW WORLD**

**The Clinical Care Center and Rheumatology Clinic**

The Clinical Care Center (CCC) is outpatient clinic of TCH. It houses numerous consultation rooms, laboratories, conference rooms, a pharmacy, as well as the Children’s Cancer Center. The Rheumatology Clinic is located on its 11<sup>th</sup> floor, along with Adolescent Medicine, Gynecology, Renal, Sports Medicine, Diabetes-Endocrine, Gastroenterology, Nutrition, Hepatology, a satellite lab, and a physical therapy gym. At



present, the Chief of Service, and also the director of the Center for Human Immunobiology, is Dr. Jordan Scott Orange, and the Rheumatology Clinic Chief is Dr. De Guzman. Including Dr. De Guzman, there are currently six rheumatology clinic physicians: Drs. Eyal Muscal, Anna Carmela Gironella, Andrea Anne Ramirez, Patricia Lizette Rosillo, and Monica Marcus.



(R-L) Dr Orange, Dr. De Guzman, Dr. Muscal, Dr. Gironella, Dr. Ramirez, Dr. Rosillo, and Dr. Marcus



They see children with a range of rheumatic diseases, including but not limited to, juvenile idiopathic (formerly rheumatoid) arthritis (JIA), juvenile systemic lupus



erythematosus and lupus spectrum disorders, juvenile dermatomyositis, scleroderma, Kawasaki disease and systemic vasculitis, rheumatic fever, and autoinflammatory disorders. Five days a week, the clinic caters to more than 30 patients each day, a good number of them being referred from all over Texas and neighboring states. Each patient is interviewed extensively and examined meticulously, and treatment plan explained in depth to the family members. For international patients, a translator is always available by phone.

### **The Rheumatology Clinic Multidisciplinary team**

Children are provided the “best of care” by a superb multidisciplinary team composed of attending pediatric rheumatologists (mentioned above) and fellows, nurse practitioners (NPs), nurse clinicians/educators, research nurse, physical and occupational therapist, nutritionist, child life specialist, and a social worker. There were five fellows during my visit: Drs. Saimun Singla, Baruch Goldberg, Brian Shirley, Miriah Gillispie, and Maria Pereira. There were two NPs: Martha Curry and Joseph Gor, while the four nurse clinicians were Jean Casella, Chanelle Molden, Paula Tong, and Jennifer Farnum. The on-call social worker at that time was Theresa Anderson.

### **Child Life**

Child Life Services is a unique department in TCH that provides developmental, educational, and therapeutic interventions for a child when he undergoes a scary or an uncertain event, such as hospitalization or an invasive procedure. I personally witnessed the child life specialists work as they prepared a 10-year old girl with JIA for intra-articular steroid injection of both wrists. Playing pretend, the child was patiently rehearsed on the how the procedure will go about, given honest expectations of the intensity of pain involved, and reassured that her parents will be present all throughout. And so inside a room filled with music from the movie Frozen, the patient was able to lie still and the procedure was completed uneventfully. I was amazed at how the entire clinic visit, including the injection, was transformed into a very positive experience for the child and her family.

### **Inpatient services – The floors**



Sick children necessitating in-patient overnight or long-term care are admitted at the TCH West Tower. TCH has a capacity of more than 400 beds and possesses state-of-the-art facilities for complex procedures and clinical imaging. The Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Progressive Care Unit (PCU, which is the ICU stepdown unit), Newborn Center, and Emergency Department are also located in the West Tower. In-patient rounds and emergency consults are taken



←←← Inside one of the consultation rooms of the Rheumatology Clinic



“Celebrity” cow statues welcome patients and visitors at the lobby of CCC.



Afternoon rounds with Dr. De Guzman

cared of by the attending-on-call and fellow-on-call for the week. Patients and visitors may enjoy a number of amenities during their stay. The **Pi Beta Phi Patient/Family Library** offers books, board games, puzzles, and movies for patients and their families of all ages. There are also Pi Beta Phi Book Nooks in the waiting rooms of the Clinical Care Center and the Abercrombie Building. I particularly enjoyed the **Radio Lollipop**, Texas Children’s Hospital’s award-winning in-hospital radio station which broadcasts through the hospital’s television system and features interactive games and art projects. TCH even has a **Hair Salon** for patients’ haircutting and styling needs.

### Ronald McDonald House Houston

The Ronald McDonald House at TCH is a 20-bedroom facility located at the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Abercrombie Building that offers a supportive, home-like environment for families of children being treated at the intensive care unit. It operates on donations and volunteers and has helped thousands of families for more than 30 years.



### Pet Therapy

Through Child Life, warm furry hugs and sloppy kisses are brought to children in the ward! TCH supports animal-assisted therapy and allows regular visits by these canines. The dogs are friendly and smart, and they have a gentle temperament.

### Infusion Therapy

Scheduled infusions of biologics, immune globulins, corticosteroids, antibiotics, and blood products, among others, are administered daily during weekdays at the Infusion Center located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Clinical Care Center. The staff is specialized in infusion therapy and work closely with the attending rheumatologist and the other members of the health care team. The area is open bay to allow easy monitoring of patients and equipped with adequate machines and comfortable chairs.

### Procedures

Arthrocentesis and intra-articular steroid injections are performed either at the Clinic Care Center during clinic hours, or the Surgical Suite of the Abercrombie Building on Thursdays. Percutaneous renal biopsies are also scheduled on Thursdays by the Renal Department. I was able to observe in a repeat biopsy of an adolescent female with lupus nephritis under the supervision of Dr. De Guzman and Dr. Scott Edward Wenderfer, pediatric nephrologist at TCH and assistant professor at BCM.

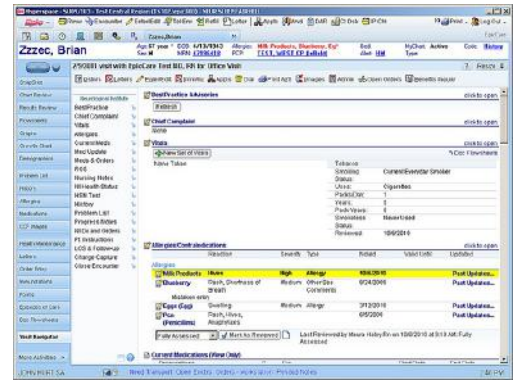
### Electronic Medical Records and MyChart

TCH patients, as with all patients in the United States, have a unique medical record encoded and accessed electronically by attending rheumatologists, fellows, and **medical scribes** during



Each hospital unit has provisions for electronic access of patient records.

each clinic visit. It contains patient history, examination findings, laboratory results, inter-departmental and inter-hospital communications, and treatment plan, that can be printed out and given to patients after their visit. Epic Systems Corporation is the private healthcare software company that handles and integrates the electronic medical records of TCH and allows 24-hour secured access by other hospitals, community clinics, and even by parents at home.



It functions not only for direct patient care, but also for appointment scheduling, registration, and billing. One of the features of Epic is MyChart, an application that gives patients controlled round-the-clock access to the same Epic medical records that their doctors use. By using MyChart, parents can request, confirm, or cancel appointments, review medical history and after-visit summaries, view laboratory test results, email non-urgent medical questions and get response, print immunization records, and request prescription renewals online. Seeing how the patients, medical team, and research sector benefit from a very efficient medical record-keeping, I realized how good an investment it could be.

### Rheumatology Conferences

On Wednesday mornings, the section holds case conferences, lupus rounds, journal clubs, and Cassidy book clubs. On the first Wednesday of my observership, instead of a case conference, lectures from the American College of Rheumatology Annual Meeting in San Francisco were reviewed. On the following Wednesdays, we discussed difficult lupus cases and a journal on chronic recurrent multifocal osteomyelitis.



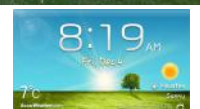
Pediatric grand rounds are held once to twice a month on a Friday at the TCH lower level auditorium.

On a monthly basis, Radiology and Renal-Pathology conferences are also scheduled. Every Friday after morning clinic, hand-over rounds for in-patients are held at the CCC conference room. I also was able to attend one hospital grand rounds about faculty and trainee development. These conferences were avenues for academic interaction for me with the attendings, fellows, and the staff.

## Thanksgiving and Christmas in TCH and the Texas Medical Center



Coming to Houston in November and staying until mid-December meant sunny and really cold mornings, and even colder evenings! But despite the freezing crisp air and the busy work schedule, the Christmas spirit is alive because of the kind people and the colorful



Christmas trees and decors you see along the streets and the hospital halls. And so I say, our hands are cold but our hearts are warm... ♥

### TCH Observership. Four weeks filled with learning opportunities

November 15 to December 15, 2015



I spent most late afternoons and evenings reviewing the cases of the day with Dr. De Guzman. I am fortunate that the country (and hospital) I am coming home to is familiar and very dear to her, and with that no questions were left unanswered, no frustration unaddressed. I leave the medical center everyday inspired by the excellence I see in TCH, and the passion of its people in healing sick children.



References: Baylor College of Medicine Visitor Observership Terms and Conditions  
Texas Children's Hospital website  
Baylor College of Medicine website      Epic website

My sincere gratitude to Dr. Christine Bernal, Dr. Sandra Navarra, and the Rheumatology Educational Trust Foundation, Inc. for making this observership possible; to Dr. Marietta De Guzman for initiating this activity and for the heartwarming support during my entire stay in Houston; to the TCH Rheumatology attendings, fellows, and nurses; and the rest of Immunology, Allergy & Rheumatology staff, for a memorable visit in TCH.

