



Interning at a Dental Office



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Introduction

Over my winter and spring break, I took time to intern at Peterson and Reddy Dental Care. I specifically worked with Dr. Peterson, who showed me around the office, introduced me to his staff, let me oversee procedures, talk to patients, and demonstrated how to clean the dental instruments. Dr. Peterson partially owns this company with his partner Dr. Reddy. It was interesting to hear him talk about the business side of his joint practice.



Image of a 3D printed tooth model used to make retainers for patients

Site Information

Name of Site: Peterson and Reddy Dental Care

Address: 11855 Holly Ln STE 103, Waldorf, MD 20601

Your supervisor: Dr. Donald Peterson

The site mission: provide dental care to the Waldorf community at reasonable prices

Discussion

Evidently, this internship was heavily geared towards my career aspirations. It was very helpful to see what I would be doing as a dentist in my day-to-day life. I really liked seeing Dr. Peterson in action, as it was a great opportunity to see what a general dentist who partially owns his practice does. I was glad I was able to come in and learn about the different dental tools, learn more about procedures, and work in an office environment that I could be in, in the future.

Activities

For this internship, I helped clean dental instruments, check patients in/out, comfort patients if they were having a tough time with the procedure and assist the dentist with anything he needed. Also, I observed various dental procedures such as placing dental implants, filling cavities, and fitting 3D printed retainers for patients. Dr. Peterson also talked me through some of the procedures and always explained what he was doing. I ended up watching him create molds for retainers, which was an interesting process. He explained the chemistry behind the agents he used, such as the UV light wand setting the gel to create a solid mold in the patients' mouth. Dr. Peterson explained what the X-rays meant and pointed out the cavities, as well as any other issues. It was fascinating to see how the bone is shaded just slightly when there is a cavity present. I was also able to talk to the new dentist and learn about her personal experiences, as well as talk to the staff.

Impact

I learned how it takes great precision and dexterity skills to become a dentist. Since you are working in someone's mouth, it is imperative that you move very careful, especially when drilling someone's tooth. There are many nerve endings in your mouth, gums, and teeth so one has to be careful to avoid those areas. This experience also showed me how much patient to dentist interaction there is-Dr. Peterson has seen most of his patients for several years. I did not realize how important it was to have a good patient and dentist relationship. Dr. Peterson had to be able to explain complicated procedures to them in layman's terms, which is an important skill to be able to do for this job. He also had to consider the patients background when recommending the best treatment for them. If one of his patients did not have dental insurance, he would not recommend the most expensive operation because he knew that would be out of the question. The communication and skills and precision it takes to be a dentist is intense, but it is something I am interested in. This made me realize that I want to help patients in dire need of dental care.

Future Work

This internship plays a huge role in my future work since I am on the pre-dental track. I will look into doing more internships this summer at other dental offices to see how they compare. This internship made me realize that I am very interested in dentistry, and it will hopefully lead me to apply to dental school in the future. This internship also made me more curious about different branches of dentistry-such as oral surgery, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, etc. It would be interesting to see how other branches of dentistry run their office in comparison and how their job differs.



Image from <http://www.petersonandreddy.com/>

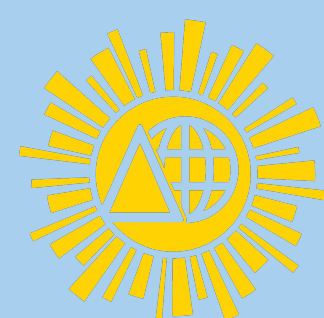
Acknowledgments:

Dr. Donald Peterson, thank you so much for letting me intern at your office and teaching me so much about the field of dentistry

Drs. Holtz & Merck, thank you for encouraging me to pursue this internship. I have enjoyed my time in the Science and Global Change Scholars Program immensely



YouTube testimonial video



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