



Building Research Skills for the Future Generation of Medicine

The Clinician Investigator Program (CIP) has allowed Dr. Joel Bierer the opportunity to take part in advanced research training, while still having the opportunity to practice clinical skills during his residency.

Dr. Bierer knew that during his residency at Dalhousie he wanted to focus on research at some point. The CIP program is what has given him that opportunity. He is currently in his second year of the program studying inflammation and therapies to reduce inflammation in children undergoing heart surgery, so that they can recover faster and subsequently leave the hospital faster with their families.

Dr. Bierer began his research at the beginning of his residency at Dalhousie, and joined CIP in his third year of residency. Since joining the program Dr. Bierer has been able to put near all of his time towards his research project, diving much deeper into it than would have been possible without CIP.

Dr. Bierer is currently working on his research with two supervisors, Dr. Horne and Dr. Marshall. He expressed the gratitude he has for both of his supervisors and the advantages that being able to choose his own advisors who specialize in work most relevant to his research has had.

“Since being at Dalhousie I have found that all the supervisors are very supportive and want to help you reach your goals,” shared Dr. Bierer.

In his first year in the CIP program Dr. Bierer completed a clinical study with 40 patients, monitoring inflammatory factors in their blood before and after surgery to see how inflammation was influenced by operations.

Now in his second year of CIP, Dr. Bierer is completing a follow up study, which he will be completing throughout the rest of his time in the CIP program.

For Dr. Bierer the program has offered many advantages to his development as a researcher and surgeon. CIP has allowed Dr. Bierer to focus 80% of his time on research, while still practicing clinical skills each month; something that is critical to maintaining technical surgical skills.

Dr. Bierer further elaborated on the advantages he has experienced through CIP. Networking is another bonus of the program he explained. Throughout the program Dr. Bierer has had the opportunity to meet some highly regarded clinician investigators, learn from their knowledge and build connections.

Overall, Dr. Bierer sees how CIP is built to develop the next generation of clinical scientists and clinician investigators in Canada via rigorous clinical and research training. He is dedicated to the program and its mission so that when he and his colleagues higher level staff later in their careers they have the skills to and really improve healthcare and its administration for Canadians.

“This training allows us to impact change in the future because of the extra research and advanced research skills that we are getting,” he says. “With this training we can go out, we can tackle problems, we can use critical thinking, and we can find solutions to improve healthcare for Canadians and people world wide.”