

Why I chose to participate in an externship

The goal was to use my elective time to investigate new topical drug delivery platforms and how they could relate to unmet clinical needs within dermatology.

My externship experience

I spent 3 weeks at Novan Pharmaceuticals in Durham, North Carolina. Novan is a small, clinical-stage drug company that has developed a novel approach to producing therapeutically meaningful amounts of nitric oxide, in stable and tolerable formulations. The company is currently involved in stage III clinical trials using nitric oxide for multiple dermatologic indications. My time was spent learning about the technology and assisting with clinical trials, regulatory documents, and manufacturing processes. I assisted with clinical trial protocol, trial monitoring, and investigator education. I spent time in the lab with IVRT and IVPT protocol. At the end of the externship, I gave a presentation to leadership on my recommendations for IVPT testing and additional dermatologic indications for Novan's nitric oxide technology.

Final thoughts

Working with a smaller pharmaceutical company gave me the opportunity to meet and learn from specialists from a diverse set of backgrounds. From lab technicians to the CEO, everyone was open and available to meet and discuss the technology and their role. It was a good balance of being exposed to completely new areas within pharmaceutical drug development while also being able to offer relevant suggestions from my experience as a practicing clinician. I would highly recommend the externship to anyone with interest in topical drug development.

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