Comprehensive Research Experience for Medical Students
Summer Research Program 2021
Supervisor/Project Information Form

Due February 24, 2021 by email to crems.programs@utoronto.ca

**Supervisor Name:** Dr. Andrea Simpson

**Project Title:** Assessing medical trainees’ understanding of age-related fertility decline, family planning goals, and impact on residency specialty choice

**Hospital/Research Institution:** St. Michael’s Hospital/Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute

**Email:** andrea.simpson@unityhealth.to

**Field of Research (2 keywords):** Family Planning, Residency

**Department:** Obstetrics and Gynaecology

**School of Graduate Studies Appointment (IMS, LMP, IHPME etc)? Yes/No:** No

**If YES, please name:**
**Brief Project Description (<300 words):**

Delayed childbearing, due to advancements in contraception and changes in modern society, has led to an increase in population rates of infertility (11.5%-15.7%), partly due to age-related fertility decline. Several studies have demonstrated a surprisingly low understanding of age-related fertility decline and the limitations of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) among medical students, residents, fellows, and practicing physicians. Physicians undergo long, rigorous training spanning over 10-15 years which falls during their optimal reproductive window. Studies have suggested that physicians experience higher rates of infertility compared to the general population, due in part to age-related fertility decline. There is limited data on how knowledge of age-related fertility decline and perceptions of the capabilities of ART may influence family planning decision-making in medical trainees. In particular, there is little Canadian data, and the majority of existing studies evaluate women only.

The objective of this qualitative study is to gain a contemporary understanding of Canadian medical students’ perceptions of age-related fertility decline, the role and limitations of assisted reproductive technology (ART), and whether these factors are an important determinant of specialty choice. We also aim to determine if and where trainees have accessed information and mentorship around career planning in the context of their reproductive goals. The study population is graduating medical students (all genders) at the University of Toronto. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis will be performed. The student will be responsible for recruiting, consenting, and conducting telephone/video interviews of participants. They will participate in transcription of audio files, and thematic analysis of the data. There will be opportunities to learn more about assisted reproductive technologies through direct or indirect observership, depending on what is allowable during the pandemic.