

CHOOSING AND CONTACTING A MENTOR

If you do decide to do research, choosing a mentor is the most important decision you will make. Once you determine the specialty in which you would like to conduct research, search the websites of USUHS, NNMC, WRAMC, as well as other DOD and civilian medical and research institutions. For instance, you can search particular departments on the USUHS website and may find a research/lecture seminar schedule or a faculty list. Our AOA Research website also has contact information for mentors in various specialties. Researchers will often have personal websites where you can search for their most recent publications and get a sense of their research focus. This will help you distinguish between those doctors who are doing basic science research and those doing clinical research.

While it is ideal to find a mentor in a field you are considering, this often can turn into a difficult and time consuming endeavor. It is far more important to find a mentor that has a worthwhile project for you and that you will enjoy working with.

The next step is to contact potential mentors in order to ascertain whether they have projects that would be suitable for a medical student. You may have to contact several doctors before you are successful.

When composing your email you should address many of the following points:

- **Introduce yourself and your year in medical school**
- **State your interest in the specific specialty or the specific researcher's projects (this is where you can butter them up with what you've learned in your search)**
- **Address your research goals (ie: long term, short term, abstract, poster, publication)**
- **Give the researcher a sense of your desired time commitment**
- **Include any intentions you have for acquiring funding**
- **Provide information about past research endeavors and/or publications (include a CV if appropriate)**
- **Be polite and professional**