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*'The internship was very effective in immersing me into the corporate environment, which is markedly different from a laboratory setting. Drawing these experiences together, the placement allowed me to understand what a typical healthcare analyst job entails, leading me to conclude that this is a line of work I could see myself enjoying in the future.'*

Having acquired extensive lab experience during my PhD, and prior to that during a 3-year research assistant position, I began feeling the urge to explore a new work area and possibly re-focus my career towards the healthcare-related private sector when I complete my PhD.

During my time at IHS, I was able to participate on all the work processes of the Research and Analysis team. I received extensive training and exposure to Same Day Analysis (SDA) writing which I began undertaking after an initial observation period of two weeks. Once immersed into SDA writing, I wrote two brief 300 word stories and eventually reached the analysts' daily target of five stories. SDA stories are a summary of a published report by a news reliable source. My published stories covered an array of topics including mergers and acquisitions, drug collaborations, Pharmaceutical company financial results, new drug approvals, intellectual property regulations and patent litigations, new government regulatory developments, R&D and clinical trial results, funding and expenditure, pricing and reimbursement (P&R) regulations and healthcare trends.

I was granted full responsibility of the following emerging markets for one month; India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. I wrote two 3,500 word monthly bulletins for IHS' 'WorldMarkets Healthcare' (WMH) service, which provides a summary to clients on all major regulatory developments, mergers and acquisitions, drug collaborations/alliances and new drug approvals that took place across the globe in the past month. I had the opportunity to present at the 8-weekly Life Sciences round-table meeting, where I made a concise summary of all the major regulatory developments and healthcare industry changes that occurred in her assigned markets in the past two months, and received extensive P&R training by a senior IHS P&R analyst.

The most challenging aspect of the placement was the SDA analysis, which required you to write 3-5 articles (depending on whether you wrote an 'A' story or not) every morning before a noon deadline. The writing itself was not difficult, but the analysis part meant that a lot of research had to go into each story before submitting to editing, which proved to be time-consuming and sometimes stressful in light of the tight 30-45 minute period allocated per story. Having to sporadically write about different countries other than my usual Indian subcontinent coverage to help fill in for analysts on annual leave, also proved to be challenging, as I had to quickly familiarise myself with the basics regarding the country's healthcare policies/pharmaceutical industry in order to make a comprehensive analysis for the relevant SDA story.

I feel that I acquired a multitude of skills and benefits from doing this placement. My extensive involvement in SDA writing, where I had to write concisely and effectively while researching the topic at hand under time pressure, boosted my writing, organisational and time management skills. Importantly, SDA writing nurtured my analytical skills, where I was required to put a new reported story into context with respect to the existing market features it falls into, under time pressure. The analytical side of SDA writing also propelled me to write succinctly using data pulled from several different information sources. Additionally, by focusing my SDA writing on specific countries, I acquired in-depth knowledge of the markets I was assigned to, ranging from the country in question's vast pharmaceutical industry and medical sector to the workings of national health ministries.

Doing this placement certainly boosted my self-confidence, as I was able to prove to myself that I am quite easily able to adapt to new working environments, and effectively learn about the tasks required. It also showed me that under time pressure, I am able to deliver well-written and researched articles, contrary to what I thought when starting the placement. It also pushed me to write more succinctly, as I have always had the bad habit of being too redundant in my writing style.

## Top Tips for other PhD students?

Generally speaking, for PhD students who don't require doing a placement during their PhD program, I would strongly recommend they do for a multitude of reasons:

1. Firstly, the placement provides a great opportunity to gain work experience which PhD students often do not have the opportunity to do
2. The placement immerses you into a completely different work environment than the one you are used to during a PhD, which enables you to determine how much you miss lab work, and whether the placement position is a line of work you could contemplate in the future
3. Even if the placement proves not to be an area of interest for the student, it still provides a new and unique work experience, which makes for a positive addition to personal development with the potential to indirectly open up opportunities and contacts within other work areas of interest