

Camryn Garoutte had a transformative experience shadowing her personal physician, Dr. Margo Tanghetti, in the field of otolaryngology. By observing from a clinician's perspective rather than as a patient, Camryn gained invaluable insights into the challenges, responsibilities, and emotional complexities that healthcare providers navigate on a daily basis. In her heartfelt essay, Camryn expressed the personal impact of this experience, reflecting on the contrast between the patient experience—focused on symptoms, emotions, and concerns—and the provider's role, which involves a balance of medical expertise, empathy, and decision-making. The essay highlights her admiration for Dr. Tanghetti's professional dedication, compassion, and the nuances of patient care that go beyond diagnosis and treatment. Thanks for spending the day on-site, Camryn. Maybe medical school will be a career path in your future! If so, we will be cheering you on at Pediatric ENT of Oklahoma!

Broadening Horizons: My Experience of Shadowing a Pediatric ENT

My perspective of medical treatment was greatly expanded by the eye-opening and life-changing experience of shadowing a pediatric ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgeon. My first encounter with Dr. Tanghetti was actually with me as a patient just last summer when I got my wisdom teeth removed, and my sinus was perforated. She squeezed me in at the last minute and performed sinus surgery just two weeks before I had to move in for my freshman year of college. Having been Margo Tanghetti's patient, I had a one-of-a-kind experience. She makes you feel like the only person in the world, hears all your needs and concerns, and always works with you while making you feel at ease. I always knew I wanted to be a doctor, but after just this interaction with Dr. Tanghetti, I became interested in pursuing a doctoral path in osteopathic medicine. Dr. Tanghetti's allowing me to shadow her reinforced that interest and got me thinking a lot more about the idea of specializing in otolaryngology.



This photo is taken right outside the clinic and shows its logo. I find it very inviting and comforting, especially for kids.

Flash forward to me shadowing Dr. Tanghetti during initial patient visits, regular examinations, and surgical discharges, which allowed me to witness the unique dynamics of pediatric care and how it differs from treating adult patients. Through this experience, I became more familiar with different medical terminology, improved my ability to observe others, and gained insight into patients' cultural backgrounds. Seeing a

newborn with a tracheostomy was an incredibly moving experience that left me significantly affected. My understanding of the subtleties of nonverbal communication, the value of cultural competence, and the complexities of healthcare have grown due to this experience, better equipping me for a medical career.

The first day I spent observing Dr. Tanghetti was exciting and full of hope. Right away, I saw a difference between adults and children interacting with medical experts when we walked into the examination room for the first patient visit. In contrast to adults, children frequently need a kinder and more playful attitude to feel at ease. Dr. Tanghetti illustrated this excellently by calming young patients with toys and a gentle voice. This first encounter brought to light the significance of empathy and flexibility in pediatric care—two abilities that are essential but different when treating adults. I learned from the experience how important it is to create a child-friendly environment to promote collaboration and trust.

I had the opportunity to see various ENT problems and treatments during these routine checks. Using the medical terms I had studied throughout my studies was one of the more memorable parts. Words like "tonsillectomy" and "dysphagia" started to take on physical form as Dr. Tanghetti explained the meaning, signs, and symptoms. Every instance allowed me to learn more about these illnesses and how to treat them. One way to gain practical insight into the complexity of pediatric ENT care is to watch how young children with recurrent ear infections are treated. I gained knowledge of the subtleties involved in identifying and managing ailments, such as some congenital illnesses, that are prevalent in children but uncommon in adults.

Within Dr. Tanghetti's office are several other pediatric ENTs in the clinic; she let me go in with Dr. Digoy and watch him use a scope on a baby with a trach, which was one of my most challenging experiences while observing. I had never seen a tracheostomy in person before, so it was particularly heartbreaking to witness one in someone so young. The delicate and complex process of examining the baby's airway by going up through the nose with a scope was part of the procedure. It was heartbreaking to watch the baby struggle to communicate and show displeasure. This event highlighted the difficulties in treating pediatric patients who cannot express pain or distress, necessitating healthcare professionals' utmost sensitivity. It also demonstrated the patient's and their family's tenacity, as they handled the circumstance with incredible fortitude.

I was honored to observe Dr. Tanghetti's interactions with patients of different racial and religious origins throughout my shadowing experience. This variety served as evidence of the importance of cultural knowledge and the inclusion of healthcare. Seeing how well Dr. Tanghetti interacted with families from various backgrounds and even those who spoke a foreign language was encouraging. She attempted to comprehend each family's particular needs and worries while demonstrating respect for ethnic customs. This part of my experience showed how crucial cultural sensitivity is to providing comprehensive and successful care. It is essential to comprehend and honor patients' cultural backgrounds to establish trust and provide individualized care.

Observing and interpreting non-verbal clues was one of the most valuable skills I acquired from my shadowing experience. Because infants and early toddlers frequently struggle to explain their problems, medical professionals must rely on nonverbal cues like body language and facial expressions. Observing Dr. Tanghetti helped me become more aware of these indicators, which enhanced my capacity to recognize and comprehend the demands of patients. This skill will help me in my future medical career since correct patient diagnosis and treatment depend heavily on sound observation. The capacity to interpret nonverbal cues frequently results in earlier problem identification and more successful solutions.

This shadowing experience has significantly impacted my professional and personal goals. The knowledge and understanding this experience has given me is priceless for someone who wants to work in medicine. My comprehension of pediatric care's unique difficulties and benefits has increased. In my future work, it will be essential for me to relate to children and their families, interpret nonverbal cues, and recognize the diversity in healthcare. Furthermore, the information and abilities I have gained will improve my capacity to offer all patients efficient and empathetic care. I am better suited to manage the practical and emotional challenges of providing pediatric care, which will be crucial in my career as a medical professional.

If I had to give any advice to fellow Honors students considering a similar shadowing experience, the most important thing is to be proactive and not hesitate to ask questions and seek clarification. Actively engaging with the doctor you shadow will help enhance our learning experience. Next, prepare for the experience in advance by familiarizing yourself with the medical terms for common conditions and procedures in the specialty you decide to shadow. This gave me a better understanding of what I was observing.

My experience from being one of Dr. Tanghetti's patients to now having been on the flip side shadowing Dr. Tanghetti at her pediatric ENT clinic was profound. I have received a well-rounded view of Dr. Tanghetti as a doctor and how she interacts with people of different ages. It improved my regard for diversity in the medical field and expanded my knowledge of diagnosing children's illnesses and ways to provide them with care. This experience has given me the knowledge and ability to treat every patient with compassion and efficiency, which will help me in the medical industry in the future. I will keep the inspiration and knowledge from this incredible experience with me as I advance in my career.