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The prospect for this summer was looking quite dull, as summer programs were cancelled and vacation opportunities were limited. However, I was gladly proven wrong when I received an email from Dr. Mary Beth Terry and Dr. Jasmine McDonald, professors at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. I met both individuals last summer as part of Mailman's Continuing Umbrella of Research Experience (CURE) internship. Thanks to that program, I had the ability to explore science careers beyond the hospital and the laboratory.

Dr. Terry and Dr. McDonald both have done work in the fields of environmental and public health, but I specifically worked with Dr. Terry on a current study that she and her team are conducting. In this study, they will be looking to limit exposure to a certain chemical known as xenoestrogens among a specific cohort of African American and Dominican mother-daughter duos. Xenoestrogens are foreign substances that mimic the function and form of estrogen, which is a female hormone necessary for puberty, development, and pregnancy. Xenoestrogens, through this similarity, can interfere with the body's natural hormonal activities. In certain studies, xenoestrogens have been found in breast tumor tissue and linked to reproductive harm. This has led to growing concern regarding the association between xenoestrogen exposure in cosmetic products and breast cancer development.

To examine the effects of xenoestrogens in both the environment and personal care products, this study provided each mother-daughter duo with cleaning product and cosmetics that were void of xenoestrogens. They were also given educational materials regarding xenoestrogens and surveys regarding their health and cosmetic product use to fill out. Most of my work last year was to create such educational material in the forms of brochures and presentations within their office. However, my work this year was not only done from home, but also had a different objective. My task was to 'clean' responses to the surveys mentioned above in order to adapt them into statistical measures. Typically, they are sorted based on an individual's (anonymous) response and the frequency of that response. This is first done manually via Microsoft Excel, then moved to online statistical software program known as SAS

Studio. On SAS Studio, frequency graphs and averages are much more convenient to create by simply typing in a specified code. In addition to this assignment, I also attended part in certain virtual conferences hosted by Columbia University and their Comprehensive Cancer Center, many of whom featured professionals in the education, health, and research fields to discuss their works and paths as a source of inspiration to the attendees.

Through my internship this summer, I was able to continue work on a topic that I felt passionate about and further analyze its significance to public health.