



AAS

Association for
Academic Surgery

Finding the Right Lab and the Right Mentor

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Disclosures

- No financial disclosures
- I disclose that the details of this talk are purely my own opinion
- Much of this will vary based on ones own personality, goals, aspirations etc.

Choosing the right lab

- What do you want to be when you grow up!
 - Clinician
 - Clinician-scientist
 - Basic
 - Translational
 - Outcomes/Health Policy
 - Scientist



Choosing the right lab

- Most important decision... What do you want to study?
 - Continuation of prior lab work
 - New hot area of research
 - Something that aligns with clinical interest
 - Institutional/departmental strength



Choosing the right lab

- The decision on what lab to join should parallel the thoughts of what job to take

Job qualities

Has what I want clinically

Track record for success

Good partners

Proven mentors

Will the job let me be a great scientist?

Will the lab let me be a great surgeon?

Lab qualities

Has what I want scientifically

Track record for success

Good collaborators

Proven mentors

Will the job let me be a great scientist?

Will the lab let me be a great surgeon?

When to start looking for the right lab

- Should coincide with looking for a job
- Ideally can have a rough idea of the landscape prior to first interview
- Must meet with potential mentors for second interview



Go it alone or join a group



VS



Deciding what lab is right for you...

- Access to good mentorship
- Access to collaborators
- Funding and source of funding
- Track record of prior junior lab members
- Size and Location



Deciding what lab is right for you...



Physician Scientist

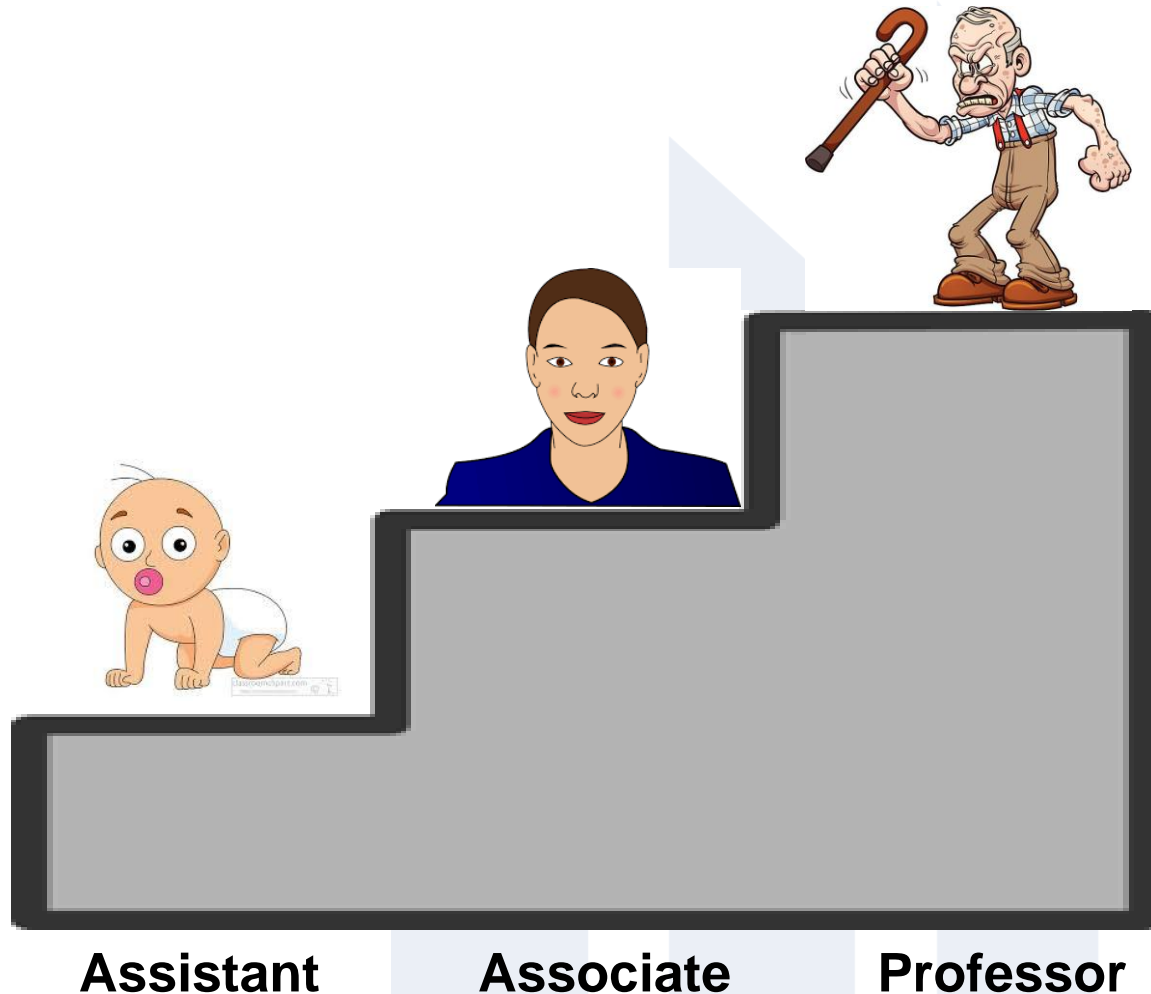


Research Scientist

- Been there
- Knows the balance
- Access to different funding streams

- Available
- Often better funded
- More options

Deciding which mentor is right for you...



Deciding which mentor is right for you...



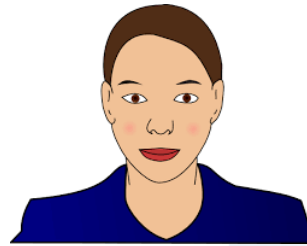
Assistant

Pro

Very available
In touch
Eager

Con

May fail
Inexperienced
Will hurt CDA
chances



Associate

Available
Collaborative
Established

May leave
Small lab
May hurt CDA
chances



Professor

Well established
Connected
Well funded
Will help CDA

Busy
May retire
Often many
trainees/mentees

Perception....

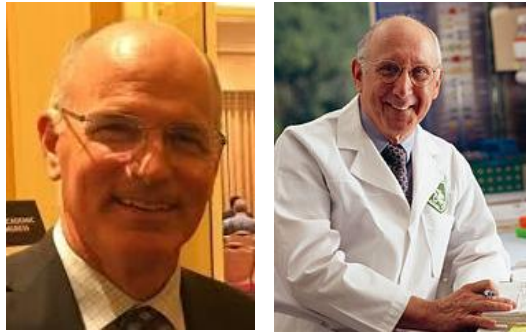


Reality.....



Mentorship by committee...

My mentor “committee”....



Big picture mentors



“Primary” mentor



Clinical mentors



“Daily” mentor



Grant guru mentor



Psychological mentor

ME

Summary

- Choosing a lab and mentor is one of the most important decisions in your career
- The choice should parallel the selection of your first job
- Decision should be made to go alone or join a big lab
- Pick a mentor who can provide guidance and is available