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PCR and Early Infant Diagnosis of HIV/AIDS

• Evaluate whether or not HIV-positive mothers tested their child for postpartum infection at 6 weeks of age.

• Identify whether or not mother was aware of her child’s result.
Women carrying water at sunset
Most Rewarding Experience

• Shadowing doctors and learning about rural medicine

• Being immersed in a new culture

• Going on a home visit with one of the doctors to follow up on a study
Soccer game on the beach
Impact

• My research was part of a larger study called called ZiBFUS (Zithulele Births Follow Up Study), which was conducted by Dr. Karl le Roux in collaboration with Stellenbosch University at the Zithulele Hospital

• My project further investigated the HIV/AIDS portion of the survey to evaluate the mother’s adherence to the early infant diagnosis at the 6 week golden standard

• My findings made the doctors more aware of testing at-risk-children for HIV/AIDS and the importance of educating mothers about PMTCT
Coffee Bay, Eastern Cape SA
Impact on Career Plans

- This experience has sparked my interest in rural medicine, which requires much more flexibility and innovation within the practice of medicine.
- I am very interested in alternative health care—especially traditional medicine, which was extremely prevalent in the rural South African community.
A man herding his goats
Conclusion

• This experience placed many concepts that I learned in the classroom in a real world context
• I am more aware of the pros and cons that NGOs have to offer, and I recognize the importance of sustainability within a resource-limited community
• I am also more mindful of foreign cultures trying to impose their standards on communities that need assistance, and the importance of being sensitive and respectful towards those that hold other beliefs