



THE MIAMI PROJECT TO CURE PARALYSIS
AN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH

July 14, 2016

Re: Dr. Jeffrey Datto

Dear UCF School of Medicine Admission Committee:

It is with great pleasure that we unreservedly write in support of Dr. Jeffrey Datto and his application to your medical school program. Jeff has worked directly with me as a supervisor of science educators for the past 2 years and within The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Given our interactions with him, we can enthusiastically state that he is a serious, dedicated and bright scientist who is committed to obtaining an MD degree with the goal of pursuing translational research in CNS injury.

At The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, Jeff has been very productive in his research studies in spinal cord injury (SCI). Jeff has already authored three manuscripts on the interaction of gender and SCI. One of these studies evaluated the interaction between cutaneous allodynia and locomotor performance after SCI. Jeff discovered that the sensation of pain itself is a covariate affecting locomotor function after SCI, which could potentially mask or confound treatment effects. This study will have a significant impact on the field and influence how investigators interpret their pre-clinical SCI behavioral data.

I have also interacted directly with Jeff through the Miami Brain Fair, which is a community education outreach event sponsored by the University of Miami. The Miami Brain Fair educates over 1000-3000 children and adults each year about neuroscience during Brain Awareness Week. This is a high quality event, made possible by the hundreds of volunteers from the University of Miami and six other universities that educate the children and adults. Jeff has served as a supervisor of the event for the past two years, ensuring that the hundreds of educators at the event are well-coordinated and that the exhibits are operating smoothly. He has been an outstanding professional at this events, handling all problems he encounters independently, effectively and positively.

Jeff graduated magna cum laude from Johns Hopkins University, and received his PhD from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. He has encountered many hurdles to obtaining an MD degree, yet remains committed to obtaining his degree and is very passionate about becoming a physician. Just in the past year, Jeff has shadowed physicians at the SCI unit at the Miami VA Hospital, volunteered at the Camilus House for the Homeless, is planning a walk for the American Society for Suicide Prevention and leads a weekly support group for those in the community suffering from depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder. In my interactions with Jeff, I can confidently state that he demonstrates a high level of integrity, professionalism and compassion towards others that will serve him well as a future physician. Thank you for considering his application to medical school.

Sincerely,

Coleen M. Atkins, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis

Department of Neurological Surgery

University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

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