

REU Experience_Soft Matter Research ^[1]

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During this summer 2015 I have participated in the REU program at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez. This program has offered me the opportunity not only of conducting research alongside very knowledgeable faculty, but of becoming more familiar with the beautiful Island of Puerto Rico, the people, and its very rich culture. Furthermore, during this time, I have been working on a project with Dr. Paul Sundaran and Jeromi Lopez. In our project, we intend to describe the mechanical properties of mineralized tendons. In order to do this, we have submerged the tissue in a fluid that recreates the properties of regular body fluid (simulated body fluids plus HA (minerals)). We will try different approaches for mineral addition, submersion and injection. Our hypothesis is that the mechanical properties of the material will change due to the adherence of minerals to the tissue, causing the modulus of elasticity to increase and the tendon to become more rigid. This, at the same time will have a positive effect in the healing process of the tendon. In conclusion, this summer experience has been rewarding; I would recommend it to students seeking to grow within their fields, make contributions to science, and submerge themselves in the Puerto Rican culture.

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