



March 2019

About me

Hi, my name is Lisa Y. Liang, I'm a PGY-3 in Sports and Exercise Medicine at the University of Toronto (completion June 2018). My hometown is Flamborough, Ontario. I completed my Bachelor of Health Sciences (Hons) at McMaster, University of Toronto Medical School, McMaster Family Medicine Residency.

Describe the reasons for and process of choosing your specialty/subspecialty.

Throughout my personal and professional career, I built up my own physical strength and mental resiliency to overcome obstacles and would like to help others do the same through Sports and Exercise Medicine.

In medical school, my interests were drawn towards musculoskeletal and neurological conditions, but I did want to pursue a career in surgery. The field of sports medicine suits me because I am a hands-on learner, and well suited to the physical nature of examining joints, muscles and nerves,

interpreting imaging, and applying procedural skills.

I enjoy building long-term relationships with patients to help educate them on their health. I enjoy promoting safe physical activity and nutrition by helping patients develop exercise habits and healthy food options in their daily lives. Patients who understand more about their ailments are more likely to participate in working towards their goals. This is another reason why the field of Sports and Exercise Medicine is so appealing to me – many treatments require patients to be engaged and take an active role in their health.

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Clinical Life

What kinds of rotations are required in your program?

Primary Sports Medicine, Orthopedics, Physiatry, Rheumatology, and Pediatrics are all components of my fellowship year. The work is mostly clinical, with some OR time as well. I also have Family Medicine for a half day throughout my residency. There is a research project that you have two half-days per month to work on.

Which of your personality characteristics are particularly helpful in your field?

Enthusiasm, being resourceful, and being a team player (no pun intended!).

What are the best aspects of your residency?

Four things come to mind:

- 1) Treating patients of all ages and activity levels, from children to high performance athletes, weekend warriors, and elderly patients.
- 2) Counselling patients about how to make physical activity part of their daily lives, or making their exercise routines

Sports Exercise Medicine Fellow Profile — Lisa Liang

safer and more effective.

- 3) Being able to narrow in on a diagnosis using history, physical exam maneuvers, and knowledge of biomechanics.
- 4) Following patients from initial injury through recovery or helping them cope with non-curable injuries.



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What does a typical week of clinical duties involve?

Weekly Schedule at a Glance							
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
06:00							
07:00			Rounds every other week	Optional Educational Rounds			
08:00			MacIntosh Sports Medicine Clinic	Community Primary Sports Medicine Clinic			
09:00		Specialty Clinic – could be Paediatrics, Rheumatology, or Orthopedic Surgery	MacIntosh Sports Medicine Clinic	Community Primary Sports Medicine Clinic	Teaching opportunity /working on Clinical Teaching Certificate courses	MacIntosh Sports Medicine Clinic	
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
13:00					Specialty Clinic	Family Medicine Clinic	Occasional event coverage (varsity events, national or international sporting events)
14:00							
15:00							
16:00							
17:00							
18:00							
19:00							
20:00							
21:00							
22:00							
23:00							
00:00							

What are the most challenging aspects of your current role?

During my fellowship year, the most difficult part has been saying “no” to optional educational opportunities. There are so many great experiences available to us within Sports and Exercise Medicine, including practical rounds with world experts,

and event coverage at varsity, regional, national and international events. Our schedules can be very difficult to balance.

One other aspect that many Sports Med physicians find challenging is work-life balance if they are covering events or teams. Many teams only expect me to cover home games; however, other teams expect travel for competitions as well. There are also major sporting-event coverage opportunities, which take physicians away from home for several weeks at a time. Of course, if you are devoted to this type of coverage, I think the experiences outweigh the negatives.

What is one question you're often asked about your decision to pursue a non-clinical career?

Do you only work with athletes?

The answer is no! We see patients of all ages and activity levels, from sedentary patients to weekend warriors and competitive athletes. We also treat a variety of conditions, not just sports injuries. Anything within the soft tissue, musculoskeletal, and neurological domains is fair game.

Can you describe the transition from junior resident to fellow?

Being a fellow resets the clock in some ways – most PGY-3s are very confident in primary care and have more experience in their fellowship domain than most other residents because of electives and interest, but it is a definite learning curve, and difficult to achieve in one year.

Will you be pursuing further training or looking for employment? What resources are available to you for future-planning?

I have opportunities for part-time work in both sports medicine and family medicine, and I was approached early on in the fellowship – this is definitely a bonus of being in this specialty! I would like to continue teaching at the undergraduate and post-graduate level, as well as being involved in patient education projects.



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Non-Clinical Life

What are your academic interests?

I have to primary areas of interest: resident advocacy and medical education.

In terms of resident advocacy, I served on the OCFP Resident Council as well as the CFPC Section of Residents for the last two years, working on the Family Medicine Resident Survival Guide and building support tools for resident education. Currently, I am elected to the PARO General Council and have enjoyed advocating for residents and exploring my interest in medical education. I am also the Enhanced Skills Program Chief Resident, which is another great opportunity to make sure residents are supported in their PGY-3 year.

I am also completing graduate courses and a teaching practicum for a Clinical Teaching Certificate, which will allow

me to explore controversial issues in medical education and build teaching skills. We have the opportunity to teach rounds, participate in journal clubs, and educate medical students and physician assistants.

What is your work-life balance like, and how do you achieve this?

My work-life balance comes mainly from my amazing family and friends, as well as interests outside of medicine. My husband, Julian, is a major support for me. I go home to see my family two to three times a month and have at least one to two social gatherings a week with friends. I take vacation time and alternate between travelling and staycations.

Keeping active helps me destress and ensures I'm setting a good role model as a Sports Med Resident. I exercise four to five times a week: doing cardio/dance/strength classes at the gym, cycling, swimming or playing squash. My husband and I both enjoy cooking, and homemade food is key to my wellness. We eat out as a treat one or two times a week. Music and art are also a big part of my life and allow me to express my creative side. I play trumpet in the Burlington Concert Band, as well as piano. I just received a guitar as a gift last year and this is my new goal to tackle! I also enjoy photography and painting.

Disclaimer: These specialty profiles illustrate some aspects of the lives of individual residents, and convey their personal perspectives on the challenges, opportunities, and rewards of their chosen fields. These views may not be shared by all residents, as there is tremendous diversity in lifestyle, experience, and interest among the residents in each specialty.