



Tafadzwa Mapiki

2023 Co-op of the Year

For her experience at the **Mayo Clinic**



Tafadzwa Agness Mapiki, originally from Glen View, Harare in Zimbabwe is a senior majoring in Biological Sciences Premedicine with two minors in Mathematics and Chemistry. Tafadzwa spent the summer of 2023 at the world's number one hospital, Mayo Clinic, in Rochester Minnesota. She participated in the Summer Research Exploration Program (SREP) run by the Otorhinolaryngology department at Mayo. Tafadzwa was selected to specifically work on research with Radiation Oncology physicians. Her research project was focused on patient-reported outcomes for patients treated with preoperative chemoradiation for a very rare cancer called perihilar cholangiocarcinoma.

Tafadzwa said, "Perihilar cholangiocarcinoma affects the bile duct of the liver and most patients diagnosed with this cancer are treated with surgical resection. But if the cancer metastasizes into the liver, surgical resection is impossible, and the patients undergo chemoradiation followed by a liver transplant. However, there has not been any research analyzing the effects of this intense treatment on a patient's quality of life and this is where I come in." So, Tafadzwa collected data that was necessary to understand the discrepancy between physician-reported outcomes and patient-reported outcomes. She used surveys from patients such as the Mayo-10, PROMIS-10, PRO-CTCAE and FACT-Hep to understand the effect of chemoradiation treatment on patient's quality of life. She also had the opportunity to observe and interact with patients as they received external beam radiation concurrent with chemotherapy twice a day for thirty days before liver transplantation. The work that Tafadzwa did will be used to provide insight and further research avenues that focus on improving patient experience as they go through radiation and chemotherapy for cholangiocarcinoma.

While she was at Mayo Clinic, Tafadzwa shadowed physicians in different specialties including neurosurgery, radiation oncology, colon and rectal surgery, orthopedics, OBGYN oncology, hematology, cardiothoracic surgery, emergency medicine, audiology, fascial and plastic surgery and ENT. This experience solidified her career goal is becoming a surgeon who conducts oncology research and integrates it into patient care.

Tafadzwa is YSU's first two-time recipient of the Co-op of the Year award for her outstanding work during her summer research internships in 2022 at the University of Florida and now in 2023 at Mayo Clinic. Tafadzwa has appeared on the President's list and the Dean's list since she was a freshman for maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She holds a prestigious full scholarship from the honors college called the Leslie H Cochran Scholarship in addition to three other merit-based scholarships from the YSU Foundation. In April of 2023, Tafadzwa was awarded the Bernadine Marinelli Memorial scholarship for being an outstanding student supervisor on campus through her Resident Assistant position with YSU Housing and Residence Life. For her evidenced exceptional leadership as the president of the International Student's Organization (ISO) and the president of the African and Caribbean Student's Union (ACSU), Tafadzwa received the Hirsch-Satrum Leadership Scholarship during last year's annual Awards Banquet.

Currently, Tafadzwa is taking it lightly in her senior year, while focusing on her next step of becoming a physician-scientist. Her mentors from Mayo Clinic have exclaimed that 'Healthcare will be a better place with Tafadzwa involved!'