



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR  
2009 PROJECT SUMMARY**

<b>Name(s)</b> <b>Sharona A. Silverstein</b>	<b>Project Number</b> <b>S0314</b>
<b>Project Title</b> <b>How Does Volunteering on Humanitarian Missions Affect Pre-Dental Students' Attitudes?</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p><b>Objectives/Goals</b> This study examines how volunteering on humanitarian missions affects pre-dental students' attitudes. People who volunteer on humanitarian missions have more intense experiences than those volunteering in other circumstances. It is hypothesized that pre-dental students who volunteered on humanitarian missions will have more positive attitudes toward themselves, more caring attitudes toward others and will be more likely to attribute poverty to societal causes than those who did not go on humanitarian missions.</p> <p><b>Methods/Materials</b> Subjects were 123 members of the UCSD Pre-Dental Society (PDS) who completed a survey assessing attitudes toward self (self-esteem, life satisfaction, satisfaction with dentistry as a career, happiness); caring attitudes toward others (empathy, commitment to help others, intent to work with the underserved, and poverty concern); and attributions for poverty.</p> <p><b>Results</b> Age ranged from 18-33 (mean=21.5). PDS members were divided into three groups: NEW members who did not volunteer (N=47), OLD members who volunteered only in free clinics (N=35), and those who volunteered on humanitarian missions (HM, N=41). Comparisons showed significant differences between groups on self-esteem (<math>p=.01</math>), life satisfaction (<math>p=.0004</math>), satisfaction with dentistry as a career (<math>p=.002</math>), happiness (<math>p=.005</math>), empathy (<math>p=.01</math>), commitment to help others (<math>p=.004</math>), intent to work with the underserved (<math>p=.004</math>), poverty concern (<math>p=.003</math>), and attributions for poverty to societal causes (<math>p&lt;.0001</math>). For all comparisons, HM members had the highest scores; NEW members generally had the lowest scores and OLD members were intermediate. Time volunteered was positively correlated with attitudes (<math>p&lt;.05</math>). Women had greater empathy (<math>p&lt;.0001</math>) and commitment to help others (<math>p=.01</math>) than men, but did not differ otherwise.</p> <p><b>Conclusions/Discussion</b> My hypotheses were confirmed. Volunteering on humanitarian missions positively affects pre-dental students' attitudes toward themselves, caring attitudes toward others and their attributions for poverty.</p>	
<b>Summary Statement</b> This study compares pre-dental students who volunteered on humanitarian missions with those who volunteered in a clinic or not at all on their attitudes toward themselves, caring attitudes toward others and attributions for poverty.	
<b>Help Received</b> Father gave me information about humanitarian missions; Mother taught me statistics; Student Director Abel Monzon and Assistant Student Director Joanne Nguyen of the UCSD Pre-Dental Society gave out surveys.	