

Final Projects: Research Paper

SAMPLE RESEARCH PAPER (B)

“The Path to Medicine”

By:

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Thesis Statement: A person considering a career as a physician should obtain an educational degree and have the patience, commitment, and determination to be prosperous in the medical field.

Purpose: To help the author understand what it will take to become a physician

Audience: Professor

Outline:

- I. Introduction: The career of a physician is integral to society
 - a. An intense study of education is key to becoming a doctor
 - b. Doctors are responsible in keeping human society healthy; Various specialities
 - c. The field is currently in a shortage
- II. Body:.
 - a. Education - A degree from an accredited university is highly recommended
 - i. The intensity of medical school overview
 - ii. Undergraduate School
 - iii. Types of Majors
 - iv. Volunteer Work
 - v. MCATs
 - vi. Medical School-4 years
 - b. Experience – with dedication and hard work
 - i. Residency, Internship, USMLE, Boards
 - ii. Various Specialties
 - iii. What a physician does
 - c. Industry Overview
 - i. Doctor shortage-Doctors in high demand; due to Baby Boomer situation
 - d. Profession and my assessments
 - i. Appeals to my personality

ii. Fits my values and beliefs

e. Evaluation

i. Involved being around people-I like people

ii. Long period of schooling is okay with me

III. Conclusion – I will keep researching the field

i. Biochemistry major

ii. Transfer out to Cal State's

iii. Trail doctors at work

Physicians play an integral role in human society. Education is the key in becoming a physician. To obtain a degree in medicine, one's education must be taken seriously. One has to have the utmost desire and determination to complete a Bachelor's degree, medical school, and to become a doctor. A person considering becoming a physician cannot be lax about the situation of schooling. It is a long journey involving hard work, little sleep, and will take a patient person to get through the many years of schooling a doctorate degree requires. The main function of a physician, or medical doctor (MD), is to diagnose and treat diseases, injuries, and other disorders, as well as promoting good health and preventing illness. There are various specialties in which one can venture into. There is a doctor shortage in the United States, so there is a great need for doctors in the future when the Baby Boomers hit the retirement age. A person considering a career as a physician should obtain an educational degree and have the patience, commitment, and determination to be prosperous in the medical field.

To get a good grasp at how the medical field works, I got in touch with my uncle, a practicing physician since 1992, Dr. Crescentino Azcueta (personal communication, June 8, 2008). As a Pediatric Physician at the Kaiser Permanente hospital in Long Beach, California, he told me the "in's and out's" of the life of a physician. He explains that the path to becoming a physician is really "all work and no play." He continued to discuss that one simply cannot fool around if he or she wants to become a doctor. He explains:

"You really have to have the aspiration to want to help people out, and if you're just doing it for the money, forget about it. Medical school is serious business, and your social life will have to dwindle down immensely if you want to do well in school. You are pretty much in class or lab all day long, and if not, you better be studying or else you will get nowhere, so there is really no time to be partying."

Dr. Azcueta also explains that volunteering is important when one is an undergraduate student. “Medical schools look at not just how good your grades are, but at how well-rounded you are in extracurricular activities,” he claims. “Volunteer work in the health field is especially significant when becoming a doctor because it gets your feet wet and gives you an idea how the health world really works and it helps you decide what type of field you want to be in,” he says.

The physician is required to devote many years to study before being admitted to practice medicine. According to Morke, author of *The Fastest Growing Careers for the 21st Century*, “The student who hopes to enter medicine should be admitted first to a liberal arts program in an accredited undergraduate institution” (Morke 281). As the Health Cares Career Directory states:

“Premedical students must complete undergraduate work in physics, biology, mathematics, English, and inorganic and organic chemistry, as well as classes in the humanities and social sciences” (334). For entry into medical school, the minimum education requirement is 3 years of college, however, most applicants have at least a bachelor’s degree, and many have advanced degrees..In addition, applicants are required to take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) as it is necessary in to gaining entrance in medical school.” (American Medical Association 334).

Many undergraduate students major in sciences such as Chemistry or Biology, however, it is not necessary to be a science major. It is rumored that applicants with non-science majors are highly looked upon by medical schools because of the diversity it brings to the school (MedSchoolHell). Dr. Azcueta advises, “Major in something that genuinely interests you...it is better to be in a major that is enjoyable than being in a major that has no interest to you.”

After the relief of obtaining a bachelor’s degree, passing the MCAT’s, and getting accepted into medical school, then come the long grueling four years of intense medical training, and the three to seven year residency afterwards (depending on what field he or she is specializing in). The *Health Care Careers Book* explains:

“The first 2 years of medical school are spent in laboratories and classrooms, taking various classes such as anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, pharmacology, psychology, microbiology, pathology, medical ethics, and laws governing medicine. Also, experience in taking medical histories, examining patients, and diagnosing illnesses is also acquired during the first two years. The book discusses that in the last 2 years of medical school, students will work with patients under the care of residents (experienced physicians) in hospitals and clinics, learning acute, chronic, preventive, and rehabilitative care.” (American Medical Association 334).

Internship and residency-on-the-job medical training at hospitals-last from three to eight years depending on what one specializes in. For the general doctor or pediatrician, residency takes about 3 years on average (Kepos 137). Bringing back my conversation with Dr. Azcueta, he says that he normally spent on average 100 hours per week at the hospital and after completing his residency, his work as a physician was relatively easy working about 30-40 hours a week. The American Medical Association discusses that licensure is required of physicians in all US states and jurisdictions to ensure that “practicing physicians have appropriate education and training and that they abide by recognized standards of profession conduct while serving their patients” by completing a rigorous examination called the USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Examination), and also beneficial, but voluntary, to pass a boards examination required by numerous hospitals (334).

Once all the internships and examinations are completed, the actual work of a physician can begin. The list of the types of specialties in which a medical student can go into is extensive: Addiction Medicine, Adolescent Medicine, AIDS/HIV Care, Anesthesiology, Asthma, Allergy & Immunology, Breast-Cancer Surgery, Cardiac Surgery, Cardiology, Colorectal Surgery, Critical Care, Dermatology Diabetes, Emergency Medicine, Endocrinology, Epilepsy, Family Medicine, Gastroenterology, General Surgery, Geriatrics, Gynecologic, Oncology, Gynecology, Hand

Surgery, Head and Neck Surgery, Headache, Hematology, Infectious Diseases, Infertility Medicine, Internal Medicine, Midwife (CNM), Movement Disorders, Neonatology, Nephrology, Neurology, Neuro-ophthalmology, Neurosurgery, Nuclear Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Oncology– Medical, Oncology Radiation, Ophthalmology, Oral/Maxillofacial Surgery ,Orthopedic Surgery, Otolaryngology (ENT), Otology, Pain Management, Pathology, Pediatrics, Pediatric Specialists, Perinatology, Physiatry, Physical Rehabilitation, Plastic/Reconstructive Surgery, Podiatry, Prostate Care, Psychiatry, Psychology, Pulmonary Medicine, Radiology, Rheumatology, Sleep Disorders, Sports Medicine, Thoracic Surgery, Transplant, Urology, and Vascular Surgery ("Specialty Definitions - Types of Doctors"). There are copious amounts of specialties in the medical field that narrowing it down can be quite the task. When one is finally specialized in a certain area, he or she has gained the knowledge and can begin their practice with patients.

The main function of a physician, or medical doctor (MDs), is to diagnose and treat diseases, injuries, and other disorders, as well as promoting good health and preventing illness. (Kepos 136). Approximately one third of the nations’ physicians are generalists-- “primary care” doctors who provide lifelong medical service. If a patient needs further treatment, he or she is sent to a specialist doctor by the generalist doctor (American Medical Association 333). Physicians have either a doctor of medicine degree (MD) or an osteopathic medicine degree (OD), and there are nearly 567,000 MD’s and DO’s employed in the United States as of 2008 (335).

Doctors are in high demand and will even be in more so in the next coming decade. According to USA Today, there is a doctor shortage in America, and country is going to be in dire need of more physicians due to the fact that 79 million Baby Boomers are soon to reach

retirement age in which the demand for more health care, and therefore more doctors, will be increased. This USA Today article discusses that in 1994 there were predictions of a 165,000 surplus of doctors by the year 2000, which inevitably did not happen. So, within the next 10 years, doctors will be in great demand, which makes the field of medicine a good candidate for job consideration ("Medical miscalculation creates doctor shortage").

In kindergarten, whenever they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always replied, "A 'doctor' or 'mom'." Growing up, I really could not see the possibility of me being anything else. As a little kid, trips to the California Science Center only fueled more of my passion into the sciences with big emphasis on how the human body works. I have always been fascinated with the complexity of the human body. The idea of being able to make an impact in a person's life has always intrigued me.

With my personality type of an ENFP, it seems to fit well with the job of a physician. According to Tieger, "Many ENFPs find work that has a positive impact on others to be intrinsically satisfying" (142). Physicians make positive impacts in other people's lives, so I as an ENFP, can find this career to be satisfying. As an Idealist Feeler, some of my characteristics include being empathetic and intuitive, and this can be very helpful when analyzing a patient's illness while being understanding of their situation as well as considerate of their feelings. This career also fits into my own ethics and beliefs, because as Tieger states, "Career satisfaction means doing work that is in harmony with my own personal beliefs and values" (141). So all in all, this career choice of helping people appeals very much to me.

The evaluations of my research on the medical field aroused my interest in it to a very high degree. It was very beneficial to research about what medical school would be like and get to hear firsthand from a doctor of what the path to medicine is really like. And now, I am excited

even more at the aspect of becoming a doctor. I find that I have an easy time getting along with people, and in medicine I will be working with a diverse crowd of people. It is the patient-physician environment I know I will thrive in. The amount of schooling seems to be very long and tedious, but it does not discourage me because I know this is what it takes to become a doctor.

To conclude, physicians play an integral role in human society, and I would like to be one of them. My research in this career field has not stopped here, but has increased greatly as I continue on with my education. I think it will be best to get a thorough idea of what kind of occupation I will be spending the majority of my life in, so doing further research is what I plan to do. I am beginning a new job as a volunteer at the Casa Colina Rehabilitation Center which is also a hands-on form of research into the medical field. My major, Biochemistry, has not changed, as the subject does indeed interest me, and I have plans to be transferring a 4-year university (Cal State Fullerton or San Bernardino). I also have current plans with Dr. Azcueta, as well as two other physician uncles, to “trail” them throughout the hospital they work at, and get a firsthand account of what life as a doctor is really like. I really am genuinely excited about the aspect that I will be joining in on the ranks of medicine in the future, and I am entirely ready to take on the challenges that come with it. My goal to be a doctor has not ceased and has remained a perpetual dream I hope to make reality one day.

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