

Medical School Personal Statement

When I was six years old, I lost my father in a bicycle accident. He was in a coma for four days before he passed away. The images of my father—barely alive, barely recognizable, and connected to multiple machines—are among my earliest memories of medicine and hospitals. Too young to understand the complications of his accident and the irreversible brain damage he suffered, I was a child who thought that medicine had failed. I associated medicine with loss. Fortunately, my grandfather, uncle, and stepfather—all physicians—introduced me to another side of health care, and together they inspired me to seek out other experiences in the medical field. As the years passed, my thoughts of medicine evolved from those ominous memories associated with my father's death to the idea of a respected profession I aspire to join.

I was twelve when I first accompanied my uncle, an interventional cardiologist, to the catheterization lab. I observed an angioplasty from a viewing window and watched my uncle unblock a coronary artery using a balloon and a stent. That experience sparked a curiosity to learn more about medicine. Watching my uncle alleviate a health problem with his skill and quick decision-making helped me understand the great responsibility of being a physician and the great satisfaction and sense of reward inherent in the profession. The fast pace of the hospital excited me, and I admired my uncle because he worked in a profession dedicated to healing and saving lives.

Among other shadowing experiences, I dedicated weekend and summer hours to working with and shadowing my stepfather, a urologist, in his private practice. I greeted patients, collected and tested urine samples, and performed clerical duties. I also observed patient visits and in-office procedures. One day I sat in on an office visit when my stepfather first diagnosed a patient with prostate cancer. After hearing the word cancer, the patient's demeanor changed. His hands and knees became tremulous and his complexion flushed. Focusing on the patient, my stepfather educated him about the diagnosis, provided advice about treatment, and answered questions knowledgeably and empathetically. My stepfather did not sip the coffee on his desk or answer his phone. I witnessed the physical and emotional anguish associated with poor health and the care and compassion necessary to comfort a patient while delivering a shattering diagnosis. There was hope in the patient before he left the office; he smiled and thanked my stepfather profusely, trusting his professional solution to the bad news. The sincere concern and bedside manner I observed drew me closer to medicine, and I realized that I possess many qualities and skills essential to becoming a good physician. I am honest, empathetic, objective, a decisive decision maker, and I work well with others.

I employed these qualities working as a resident assistant at Ohio Wesleyan University my junior and senior years and actively emulated my stepfather's compassion while helping others. During the fall of my senior year, for example, a first-year student committed suicide. Residents were devastated and looked to me for guidance and support. I met with residents to assess their mental health and organized a meeting to make cards for the boy's family. One night, a crying resident knocked on my door at

11pm. She needed someone to talk to because the suicide reminded her of losing her brother. I was getting ready for bed, but concerned for her well-being, I welcomed her into my room. My heart went out to my resident as she shared stories of her youth in tears. I listened, hugged her, and when she stopped crying, we talked for two hours on my futon and painted our nails. As a resident assistant, I discovered first-hand the difficulty and compassion required to care for people who are frightened and hurt; I learned how much I valued being the person someone turns to in a time of need, and this further inspired me to pursue a career in medicine.

Until college, I did not understand the magnitude of importance academics played in applying to medical school. My study skills were underdeveloped from high school, and I struggled with the heavy course load and rigor of my science classes. Initially discouraged by average grades, I reevaluated my future aspirations. I decided to pursue medicine full-heartedly and I dedicated my time and efforts to improve my study tactics. It was hard work, but my grades steadily improved as my passion for science and medicine increased. By senior year I had conducted independent research and had earned A's in all of my classes.

Since graduation, I have taken additional science classes in Immunology and Developmental Biology, and I am currently working at The Ohio State University researching cardiovascular ischemia-reperfusion injury. Working to discover novel ideas in lab has augmented my passion for science. I am inspired to ascertain and share knowledge that may be used to improve the healthcare field and impact a broader range of people than one-on-one patient care alone. I feel ready and prepared to attend medical school and commit my life to pursuing knowledge, performing research, and using my education to positively contribute to society as a medical doctor.