

During my freshman and sophomore years at University A, I worked as a physical therapy assistant on a voluntary, part-time basis at Medical Center B in Hometown, State. In the course of this experience, the most important conversation I had relevant to my career goal as a physician was with a nurse. I had observed that she was exceptionally intelligent, knowledgeable, and competent, and I asked her why she had elected to become a nurse rather than a doctor. "A physician has to make a lifetime commitment to medicine; his profession must be his first priority. I am not prepared to have my profession dominate my life." Her response did not surprise me; it only served to reinforce my commitment to a profession in which I had become actively involved.

For the summer of 20xx, while I could have continued my work in physical therapy, I chose to seek a position which I felt would provide a new perspective from which to view medicine. Upon returning to Bigtown, I began working at the Department of Radiology at Medical Center C. My activities were concentrated in the Special Procedures Division where one of my duties involved assisting the nurses in preparing the patients and the rooms for the scheduled test. I observed the procedures which usually were angiograms, venograms, or percutaneous nephrostomies. I was usually provided with a detailed explanation in the course of the procedure which was informative and educational. At the conclusion of the procedure, I listened to the radiologist read the X-rays and learned about the patient's problems and the appropriate treatment(s). The staff, after getting to know me, encouraged my spending time with many of the apprehensive patients to try and alleviate some of their anxieties and to be generally supportive. In addition, for one hour each day, I attended classes with the interns where I learned basic human anatomy, how to interpret some of the nuances of complicated X-rays, and listened to a discussion of some of the interesting cases that occurred weekly. My experiences at Medical Center C were so stimulating that I immediately applied for placement for the following summer and was accepted.

In June 20xx I began to work as a research assistant for Dr. Teicher, a surgeon at Medical Center C. The research concerned the reliability of the criteria for the diagnosis of appendicitis. The justification for the research is the problematic nature of diagnoses as evidenced by the significant negative laparotomy rate. The aim of this study was to assess the feasibility of increasing the diagnostic accuracy. A large part of my activities involved using the hospital computer to retrieve, study, and evaluate appropriate patient charts in order to enlarge the statistical sample. My activities have not only made me more appreciative of the importance of medical research, but it has also shown me how some physicians combine their practice with clinical research.

After reading the article "The Ordeal: Life as a Medical Resident" in *The New York Times Magazine*, my understanding of the strong commitment a physician must make was strengthened. Unlike the nurse in Hometown, I have been impressed by the many doctors who lead rich and rewarding home lives, as well as being totally dedicated to their profession.

Besides a sense of dedication, I am aware that appropriate academic ability is needed to meet the demands of medical school and postgraduate training. I elected to attend University A because it is an excellent institution of higher education, and I wanted to be on my own so as to develop the self-confidence necessary to manage my life. My high academic performance and my science MCAT scores confirm my ability to handle the anticipated demands of the medical sciences. In light of both my clinical exposure and medical educational preparation, I feel confident that I will be prepared for the demands of medical education, training, and practice. I look forward to beginning this exciting and challenging adventure.