
Helping People – A Career Of My Dream

I have always had this idea that I would have a career in helping people, but I could never quite work out where I fit. After weeks of work experience in schools and vets, and a part time job in retail, I just knew they were not really for me. Then I joined St. John's Ambulance cadets. From my very first meeting, I was thrown into first aid training with various mock casualties to deal with. It was very important that as a team we quickly took a primary survey and made a decision of how to approach the problem. I also recently completed a four-day first aid course with St. John's, which now enables me to go to events and put everything I've learnt into real life situations. I had the opportunity to do some work experience in St. George's Hospital, where I rotated around a variety of departments, observing doctors in clinics, wards and intensive care. Throughout the week I spoke to many professionals about their specialized areas and some of the cases they have encountered throughout their time as a doctor. A case that particularly interested me throughout my time there was an aortic dissection.

Although CVD is a part of my A-level biology course, this was something that I was completely unfamiliar with, but after listening to the consultant explain it in a follow-up appointment with the patient, I became very interested in it, and went on to do some further research on it later that day through books found in the library and from online resources. Throughout my time there, I was also able to see multiple echocardiograms, which were also very interesting to consolidate what I had been told previously about certain heart conditions. I also did some work experience in a veterinary surgery, where I was able to watch some surgeries. This allowed me to learn how important a sterile environment is for theatre and how to achieve these kinds of conditions. I also saw how important teamwork was throughout the surgery in order to keep everything running smoothly.

Another area that I became particularly interested in through my work experience was oncology. I spent some time over the summer volunteering in a local hospice's day center. This experience gave me the chance to see first-hand how life-limiting illnesses, particularly tumors, affect people on a more personal level. Along with helping out with daily duties such as making drinks, serving lunch and cleaning, I was able to listen to some of the patient's stories about how their lives had changed since they found out about their illness. After this, I was given the opportunity to attend a lecture at UCL on cancer. The lecture made me appreciate how complex tumors are, hence why they are so difficult to treat.

Studying Biology A-level this year has really inspired my interest in learning about the anatomy of the human body. I attended the one day course, 'Operating Theatre Live', in London, where I was taught about the anatomy of the human body in far more detail than covered in the A-Level course. There, I was given the opportunity to dissect the brain, eye, heart, respiratory system and digestive system of a pig. This further helped me to learn the anatomy of the body by seeing it with my own eyes. The leader of the course, human anatomist, Samuel Piri, inspired me to keep finding out more about the human anatomy. This led me to a MOOC entitled 'Using Microscopy to Study Anatomy and Identify Disease' run by The Open University. I have recently completed an EPQ exploring the question, 'To what extent does TV and media stigmatize mental health in young people aged 13-18?' After seeing my best friend suffer with depression, it is a topic that I feel needs discussion. I recognize that stigma and lack

of information make it much harder to speak out. So, as a part of my EPQ, along with a 2000-word essay, I have produced a short film about how the stigma surrounding mental illness affects many young people. The independent research required for EPQ allowed me to learn new skills such as Harvard referencing and choosing reliable sources which have further aided me throughout my other A-Level subjects.

I am aware that a career as a doctor is not straightforward and definitely not glamorous. The hours are unsociable and the days are long. But after seeing the difference that a single person can make to so many lives, I am sure that it is something that I want to be a part of.

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