Medicine (Cambridge)

Medicine is a multifaceted, dynamic field that I would like to be part of. I am an enthusiastic learner and have essential qualities, which when further developed, would make me a responsible and worthy practitioner. The deep job satisfaction and commitment my parents show to their medical careers has impacted on me enormously and inspired me to become a doctor. The plethora of medical literature around the house is indicative of how continuous learning is an integral part of being a doctor. This aspect, together with the empathetic and diagnostic roles of a doctor, appeal to my personality.

Over the past two years I was lucky to gain placements in both primary and secondary care, which enhanced my understanding of applied sciences and further confirmed my resolve to study medicine. Cumulatively, I observed and appreciated a wide range of essential interpersonal skills, pertinent to the practice of medicine. Shadowing a GP, I was impressed by how the doctor approached his patients and conducted his consultations. Listening and talking to a patient in a very holistic and familiar way showed that there was mutual trust and respect between them. My experience with a Breast Unit highlighted how doctors have to be very skilful and able, in order to recall from the thorough knowledge of their specialism to apply to individual cases. This was very much demonstrated when I attended two MDT meetings and the diagnostic and prognostic clinics that followed. Care of a patient who needed replacement of privately performed cosmetic implants enhanced my understanding of the complex issues of NHS funding. Another case of a lady who had returned after alternative cancer therapy tested the consultant's patience, knowledge and persuasive skills for her to agree to conventional scans. I have learnt that all doctors, be it at a GP surgery or hospital, require the same skills of passion and commitment to patient centred care.

My time at an IVF Unit and a Research Oncology Unit emphasised the importance of new knowledge in the development of medicine. These placements and attendance at two medicine master classes inspired me to conduct my own personal research and contribute articles and presentations to school journals and societies. The topics I covered were IVF, Herceptin Treatment for Breast Cancer and Passive Smoking. These projects greatly enhanced my analytical reading and writing skills. I enjoy reading the BMJ and popular medical books such as Do No Harm and Bad Science. I was particularly impressed by the way Ben Goldacre critically scrutinises alternative remedies, which highlighted the importance of evidence-based medicine to me.

I hold several positions of leadership at school, the most responsible being Vice Captain of School. Volunteering at a charity shop for nine months and my on going commitment on a hospital ward has enriched my cultural and social understanding. Having to manage my time positively and productively is challenging but continues to be energising and motivating. Accomplishing the bronze and silver DofE awards encouraged me to take on a bigger challenge. My recent expedition as a research volunteer in the Peruvian Amazon taught me how to adjust and adapt to an unfamiliar, demanding environment and to work with team members with differing temperaments. Playing in the school's rugby 1st team is both immense fun and therapeutic. Working with others towards the same goal has impressed on me how collaborative effort can be very rewarding. My varied extra-curricular activities enable me to think more laterally and become more competent and confident in articulating my ideas.

My experiences so far have contributed towards my personal maturity and inculcated in me the importance of diligence, dedication and determination. I am passionate about medicine. I have confidence in my stamina and ability to rise to the demanding rigours of medical studies and to the socially responsible and accountable career that follows.

Medicine (Oxford)

When we personalise disease, it becomes far more striking than considering it on a scale too large to fathom. It is inspiring that this poignant notion is mirrored in the fabric of the NHS where individualised healthcare is implemented on a mass scale. My appreciation of the body's complexities, in both its resilience and its frailty, motivates me to study science and the privilege of supporting people in difficulty inspires me to pursue Medicine.

I find the 'Why' questions of science, in a proximate and more recently in an evolutionary sense, are most exciting and so I have been motivated to develop my interests beyond the AS syllabus. For instance, 'Why We Get Sick,' discusses how evolutionary principles can inform medical knowledge and practice. Here, my favourite idea was the Trade-Off hypothesis, which argues that many of the body's perceived flaws are in fact compromises made over time. This synergised well with further reading from Student BMJ, which has deepened my interest in the applications of science. Whilst researching breast cancer for my EPQ, I was fascinated to learn about the controversies of mammographic screening and the modalities of therapy in the NHS. I also enjoyed reading 'The Epigenetics Revolution,' where I was interested to learn how DNA methylation is a mechanism in gene repression, which is essential to cell differentiation. I have recently begun an Open University module, 'Molecules, Medicines and Drugs,' to explore the biochemistry of such processes further. Having read more widely, I realise how little I know but at the same time I relish the enormity of the science that I am yet to encounter.

Whilst shadowing doctors in both primary and secondary care, I witnessed the reality of good clinical practice. Communication skills were crucial in probing, informing and supporting patients whilst teamwork, as evident in multidisciplinary meetings, transcended the intuitions of any one doctor. Observing doctors evaluate risks versus benefits before requesting endoscopies or coronary angiograms, showed me how technology is used responsibly to inform diagnoses. The distinction between obligation and compassion was also demonstrated to me when the consultant spent time reassuring a particularly distressed patient with Parkinson's disease. It was inspiring for me to witness and it illustrated how the role of a doctor goes beyond diagnosing and treating. Eager to understand how neurological degenerative diseases developed, I chose to study Parkinson's disease for my Biology AS report. I was interested to learn how a loss of dopaminergic neurons affected mood as well as movement. Volunteering at my local hospital over seven months, where I fed and spoke to patients, revealed to me that medicine is often about managing disease rather than curing it. I found it challenging to engage patients but empathising with them and persevering nonetheless was gratifying.

In addition to my studies I have immersed myself in many enjoyable activities. As School Captain I have sharpened my communication skills by leading and delegating when organising school events whereas as vice-president of Medics Society I have enjoyed a supportive role. Having represented my school in both cricket and basketball, I have learned the value of teamwork. Taking lead roles in school plays was a rewarding experience because of the intriguing characters I played. I also cherish the exposure to a unique musical culture that I gained in achieving distinction in my Grade 6 Karnatik Percussion practical and theory exams.

I'm aware that medicine is a challenging profession, which requires considerable personal sacrifice, but I feel I have the empathy, interpersonal skills and desire to care for people in order to succeed as a doctor. Above all, I can fulfill my passion for science in the social context of serving not just individual patients but the community at large.