Introduction to Pre-Medicine: The How, Why, How, and Why of the Process

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Outline

• Mission of the University of Utah School of Medicine Admissions
• Why a diverse population of medical students is important
• Cultural competence and assessment of the applicant and student: Who are you?
• The Life of a Pediatrician: Why Do It?
University of Utah SOM
Admission Office Mission

• To select the most capable students to attend our school and to have a balanced, but heterogeneous group that will excel in both the art and science of medicine.

• We recognize that a diverse student body promotes an atmosphere of creativity, experimentation and discussion that is conducive to learning.

• Exposure to a variety of perspectives and experiences prepares students to care for patients in all walks of life and in every segment of society.
Commonwealth Fund Report
Summary of Key Findings

• Cultural Competence and Health Care
  – 11-15% of racial and ethnic minorities feel they would have received better care if they had been of a different race or ethnicity

  – >15% felt they had been treated with disrespect during health care visit
Some Possible Explanations from Institute of Medicine

- Stereotyping
- Time Pressures
- Poor patient/physician communication
- Lack of physician/patient relationship
- Language barriers

Institute of Medicine. Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care, 2002
Doctors face disparities in care of African Americans

- Medicare provider survey
- Doctors who treat African Americans face greater difficulty getting access for their patients to subspecialists, diagnostic imaging, hospital admissions, and good ancillary services
- Doctors of white patients had less trouble in each of these access areas

American College of Physicians
Patient Issues

• Health care providers need to acknowledge the culture of their patients
American College of Physicians Provider Issues

• Physicians and other health care providers must be sensitive to cultural diversity among patients and recognize that inherent biases can lead to disparities in health care among racial and ethnic minorities
Cultural assessment of the applicant and student

• Who are you?
• What do you do?
• What do you want to be?
Cultural assessment of the applicant and student: Who are you?

• Often the applicant has not asked him/herself this important question
• Forms the basis for why they are choosing medical school
• Should be the first question presented by the pre-med advisor or mentor
Cultural assessment of the applicant and student: Who are you?

- Is reflected in personal statement, activities list (e.g. hobbies, work experience, volunteering), choice of shadowing
- Admissions committee will ask this question when reviewing the application, especially when inconsistencies are found
Example

- Hobbies: Yoga, reading, guitar, web designer
- Volunteering: research lab, playing guitar
- Research: database analysis
- Leadership: telemarketing manager, web-based company manager

Personal statement: "I’m a people person..."
Example

- **Hobbies:** cross-country skiing, mountain climbing, hiking, rock-climbing
- **Volunteering:** wilderness guide, ski patrol, resort clinic tech
- **Research:** effect of fungal infestation on local forest
- **Leadership:** lead ski patrol, coach ski team in college, manager ski resort

**Personal statement:**
I have always wanted to be a doctor..."
Example

• Work experience: baby-sitting, child care center, recreation center, Youth center manager
• Volunteering: girl-scout camp counselor, baby nursery tech, child life specialist
• Research: Primary school obesity
• Leadership: cheer leading squad coach, dorm resident assistant, campus government, youth center

Personal statement:
“...I love working with children...”
The Life of a Pediatrician:

A Cautionary Tale
The life...
How is your debt now?
Are you ready for...
How is your sleep now?
The life...
Summary

• Education in cultural competence at the UUSOM identified as a strategy to reduce health disparities
• Ask the applicant “Who Are You?”
• Ask: are you ready for the life?
Thank you