

why I came to medical school!

Rele Ologunde tells his story

In front of me are the interview panel; my final hurdle, my gateway, my greatest obstacle.

The interview has gone well so far, and then comes the dreaded question: 'So why do you want to study medicine?'

how the journey began

I didn't always know I wanted to be a doctor. Though interested in medicine, I had never aspired to it as a career. From an early age my passion had been for acting. I enrolled in drama school at the age of eleven, and rehearsed weekly after school. Television and film work gave a unique opportunity to meet and work with people from all over the world and in hindsight, it was time well spent developing communication skills.

I drew strength from his words reminding me: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding

Approaching the end of secondary school, I considered what to do as a career. I was enjoying acting, but medicine had begun to weigh more heavily on my heart. God spoke to me about following a career in medicine through various events; from words of inspiration from members of my local church to my grandfather's death from cancer. Each event had its own message. The turning point came during a two-week work experience placement at my local hospital.

Everyone I met genuinely seemed to enjoy what they were doing, and I could see how they were making a positive impact on people's lives, beyond just treating them medically.

crunch time

Having failed to secure a single offer on my first application for medicine, I wondered 'God, can this really be your will for me?' I drew strength from his words reminding me: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding'.¹ A-level results day came and despite passing all exams at first sitting and meeting the entry requirements of all the universities I had applied for, I was faced with the reality of not being accepted to study medicine. I had to consider either a post-graduate route into medicine or take a gap year, the latter being an idea I had always resisted. However, God had other plans.

the gap year

Looking back on my year out, I have no regrets. Among other places in Europe, I spent a month in Chisinau, Moldova, volunteering in a maternity hospital. As well as getting exposure to surgery, the time spent in Chisinau also made me reflect on how often I take things for granted. It is easy to forget that the level of healthcare we are accustomed to in the UK is far from the norm even in other parts of Europe. I also had the opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip to Hungary, run by Operation Mobilisation,²



Rele M Ologunde
is a preclinical medical student
at Imperial College, London

which also involved some time in Rivne, Ukraine, taking part in discipleship and evangelism training. This served to prepare and spiritually equip the volunteers on the mission to serve and to lead in the upcoming camps. Groups were dispatched to Moldova, Hungary, Romania, and other parts of Ukraine.

we can take comfort in the knowledge that God is greater than any obstacle we will ever face

My group was dispatched to Litér, Hungary, where we helped organise and run a children's summer sports camp. During my time there, I experienced God's love and presence in ways that I had never before. The night before I left Litér, I was in van heading back to camp, with some of the other volunteers, making our way down an unlit country road when a friend filled with complete amazement and awe told us to look out of the window at the sky. We got out of the van and looked up and were all consumed with absolute veneration at the sheer beauty of what we saw. We lay down in the middle of this quiet country road cloaked in the pitch black of night with our gaze fixed above. On this night in the clear sky above it looked as if every star in the universe was shining as brightly and as clearly as never before. The words of the Psalmist 'When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the

stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?'³ truly came alive.

This encounter with nature reminded me how great our God is. At times it feels as if we are swimming upstream whilst the torrents of life are drowning us but at these moments we can take comfort in the knowledge that God is greater than *any* obstacle we will ever face.

why medicine?

So why do I want to study medicine? Ultimately it is where God has led me. I feel medicine is one of the few professions where altruism is in the job specification and I find such satisfaction in that.

Our paths to studying medicine are varied, but as future doctors we must remember our first call is to serve the Lord; first we are Christians, second we are doctors. In the modern secular culture of medical school, one can so easily be led astray from the path of calling. We must endeavour to be true to our calling and as disciples of Christ, strive to uphold his image in all we do.

So to those just embarking on their career in medicine; enjoy it, work hard and be encouraged to shine for Jesus Christ. ■

REFERENCES

1. Proverbs 3:5
2. Operation Mobilisation www.uk.om.org
3. Psalm 8:3-4