

Suggested Reading List for Pre-Health Professions Students

On Admissions and Applications:

Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) Association of American Medical Colleges. In bookstores or order from AAMC Publication, 655 K Street NW, Suite 100 Washington, DC 20001- 2399 (202) 828-0400. Updated annually with latest admissions statistics and information for all accredited medical schools in the US and Canada. www.aamc.org/publications

Admission Requirements of U.S. and Canadian Dental Schools. American Dental Education Association (ADEA). 655 K Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036-2212 (202) 6289-7201. Updated annually with latest information regarding admissions statistics and information from accredited dental school in the US and Canada. www.adea.org

Osteopathic Medical College information Book. American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) 5550 Friendship Boulevard, Suite 310, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-7231 (301) 968-4100. www.aacom.org

Schools and Colleges of Optometry: Admissions Requirements. Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) Publications, 6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 510, Rockville, MD 20852. (301) 231-5944. Updated annually. www.opted.org

Health Professions Admissions Guide: Strategy for Success . (tenth edition), National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions, P.O. Box 1518, Champaign, IL 61824-1518. www.naahp.org/publications.aspx

Getting Into medical School! A Guide for the Perplexed. Kenneth V. Iserson, M.D. Galen Press Ltd., P.O. Box 64400, Tucson, AZ 85728-4400, (800) 442-5369. www.galenpress.com

Dental School: Preparation, Survival, and Success. Dr. Dean Brandon. Matrixbrand Publishing. The book describes what it takes to get into dental school, how to survive dental school, and excel in the profession.

The Pre-Dental Guide: A Guide For Successfully Getting into Dental School. Joseph S. Kim. DDS. Provides pre-dental students with pertinent information about factors to consider when applying to dental school as well as information on the major elements of the DAT and how to prepare for it.

Write for Success: Preparing a Successful Professional School Application. Evelyn Jackson and Harold Bardo. Published by National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP), P.O. Box 1518, Champaign, IL 61824-1518. www.naahp.org/publications.aspx . A manual geared specifically towards writing for health profession admissions applications. Examples of successful and unsuccessful essays with feedback from three health profession admissions deans and advice on written responses to health profession admissions applications. (\$10)

Medical School Interview. Dr. Ronald Zielinski. Published by National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP), P.O. Box 1518, Champaign, IL 61824-1518. www.naahp.org/publications.aspx . A pamphlet of opinions from admissions officers, interviewers and successful medical school candidates on the interview process.

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Becoming a Doctor: A Journey of Initiation In Medical School. Melvin Konner, M.D. Author entered medical school at 33 years of age and chronicles his account of the third year of medical school.

The Anatomy of an Illness. Norman Cousins. Famous author's story of his battle with cancer and the overuse of chemotherapeutic drugs.

Days of Grace. Arthur Ashe. Tennis great's autobiography which includes his battle with AIDS.

Not All of Us Are Saints. David Hilfiker, M.D. Written by a physician who gave up his rural practice in Minnesota to practice in a poverty ravaged community in Washington, DC.

On Doctoring: Stories, Poems, Essays Richard Reynolds and John Stone. Collection of work by physicians and non-physicians on what it is like to be sick, to be cured, to lose and to triumph.

Out of My Life and Thought. Albert Schweitzer. Autobiography of the legendary jungle doctor.

Doctor Stories. William Carlos Williams

The Lives to Come. Philip Kitcher. Analysis of ethical and social concerns that surround human molecular and genetic engineering.

Insider's Guide to Medical Schools: Current Students Tell You What Their Medical School is Really Like. Ivan Oransky (Ed.) Narrative reports from students at 138 accredited medical schools.

White Coat: Becoming a Doctor at Harvard Medical School. Ellen Lerner Rothman. A vivid account of her four years at Harvard describing the grueling hours and emotional hurdles she overcame.

Just Here Trying to Save a Few Lives: Tales of Life and Death in the ER. Pamela Grim, M.D. ER Physician's account of her "life and death" world.

Finally...I'm a Doctor. Neil Shulman. A hilarious novel based on the author's experiences as a young doctor.

Sympathy and Science: Women Physicians in American Medicine. Regina Morantz-Sanchez. A history of American women physicians and their struggle for acceptance in the medical world.

Health Care Systems Around the World: Characteristics, Issues, Reforms. Marie L. Lassey and Martin Jenks. A multi-disciplinary examination of health care systems in a variety of countries.

Caring for Patients From Different Cultures: Case Studies from American Hospitals. Geri-Ann Galanti. 172 case studies of actual conflicts of culture that occurred in American hospitals.

In the Country of Hearts: Journeys in the Art of Medicine. John Stone. A cardiologist writes about the interface between the anatomical and the metaphysical hearts in each person. Encounters from 25 years of experience treating patients with heart ailments.

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down. Anne Fadimar. Story of Lia Lee, a young Hmong immigrant who developed symptoms of epilepsy and was left brain-dead after a tragic cycle of misunderstanding, overmedication and culture clashes between the medical community and her family.

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House of God. Samuel Sham. A hilarious novel about six interns who saw themselves as modern “saviors to be” making the adjustment from “top of their class in medical school to bottom of the hospital staff as interns”.

An Unquiet Mind. Kay Redfield Jamison. Autobiography of a psychologist and professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins. She discusses her struggle with bipolar mood disorder and her treatment.

Mountains Beyond Mountains, Tracy Kidder. Story of Dr. Paul Farmer, MD/PhD and his work in Haiti treating infectious diseases.

What Patients Taught Me: A Medical Students Journey. Audrey Young, MD. Memoir of the emotional complexity of treating patients when their lives are hanging in the balance.

On Call: A Doctor’s Days and Nights in Residency. Emily R. Transue. Focuses on stories of patient’s lives, illnesses and the relationships developed between doctor and patients.

The Closest of Strangers: A Doctor and His Patients Experience the Human Side of Healing. James Judge.

House Calls: Memoirs of a Country Doctor. Marvin Brown.

Splendid Solution: Jonas Salk and the Conquest of Polio. Jeffrey Kluger. The struggle to eradicate Polio in the mid-20th Century and Dr. Salk’s work in developing a vaccine.

Walk on Water: Inside an Elite Pediatric Surgical Unit. Michael Ruhlman. Focuses on Dr. Roger Mee of Cleveland Clinic, in whose hands baby’s lives rest almost daily.

Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry. Paul Starr. A history of how the entire American health care system evolved over the last two centuries.

The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream. Sampson Davis. The story of three young men who made a pact while growing up in crime ridden Newark, New Jersey that they would make something of themselves. Two became doctors and one a dentist.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. Rebecca Skloot. Henrietta Lacks was a poor tobacco farmer whose cells were taken without her knowledge. These cells became known as HeLa cells and were vital in the development of the polio vaccine, uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses and other medical advances. The book explores the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether “we control the stuff we are made of”.

Death to Dust: What Happens to Dead Bodies. Kenneth V. Iserson, MD. This book answers questions about what happens to a dead body. What happens in embalming, cremation, autopsies, organ donation, etc. It describes how different cultures deal with corpses and societal experiences.

The Dressing Station: A Surgeon’s Chronicle of War and Medicine. Jonathan Kaplan. The author has been a hospital surgeon, air-ambulance doctor, and a trauma surgeon. He provides a portrait of what it is like to be a physician on the battlefield and the challenge of trying to maintain humanity in the midst of a war zone.

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Death of the Good Doctor: Lessons from the Heart of the AIDS Epidemic. Kate Scannell, MD. Dr. Scannell left her career in academic medicine to work in a county hospital AIDS ward in Northern California. The book chronicles her experiences with stories of patients with whom she worked. Her idea that “a good doctor is one who saves lives” was transformed as she dealt with patients who were dying despite all the interventions and treatments.

How Doctors Think. Jerome Groopman, M.D. This book provides a window into the mind of a physician and provides thoughtful examination of the doctor/patient relationship. The forces and thought processes behind the decisions doctors make is explored in exploring how doctors succeed and why they err.

The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer. Siddhartha Mukherjee, M.D. Pulitzer Prize winning book that presents a humane “biography” of cancer—from its first documented appearances thousands of years ago through epic battles in the 20th century to cure, control and conquer it to a radical understanding of its essence.

Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story. Cecil Murphey. The story of Ben Carson’s odyssey from a childhood in inner-city Detroit to position as direct of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital at age 33. Filled with case histories and dramatic and intimate stories for Dr. Carson’s struggle to beat the odds.

Intoxicated by my Illness and Other Writings on Life and Death. Anatole Broyard. A collection of irreverent, humorous essays written by long-time book critic and NY Times essayist during his battle with cancer that led to his death in 1990.

At the Will of the Body: Reflections on Illness. Arthur Frank. A memoir of the authors encounters with serious illness—a heart attack at age 39 and a diagnosis of cancer a year later. He offers brilliant insights into what happens when our bodies and emotions are pushed to extremes by the events of illness within. He seeks to illuminate what illness can teach us about life.

Black Man in a White Coat: A Doctor’s Reflection on Race and Medicine. Damon Tweedy. A doctor’s memoir of his experiences at Duke Medical School and transforming into a practicing physician. He discovers just how often race influences his encounters with patients.

The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat. Oliver Sacks. A compilation of clinical tales that are richly human in nature. The book “inspires and enlightens any scientifically curious mind as to the nature of neuropathology and its manifestations”. Through stories of patients the reader sees how damage to certain areas of the brain are manifested.

The Family that Couldn’t Sleep. D. T. Max. This book tells a fascinating story of the discovery of prions, infectious misfolded proteins that affect the brain. It delves into the nature of sleep, following a family with an inherited form of fatal insomnia.

The Checklist Manifesto. Atul Gawande. This book looks at how medical professionals deal with increasing complexity of responsibilities and examines human failure. Despite complex situations, the reasons for failure can be extraordinarily simple.

The other Side. Kate Granger. Granger is a doctor specializing in geriatric medicine but is also a terminally ill cancer patient. This book describes her journey “as a patient through a doctor’s eyes”.

The Night Shift: Real Life in the Heart of the ER. Brian Goldman. An ER physician shares his experiences of working the night shift of an Emergency Room in downtown Toronto.

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Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End. Atul Gawande. A practicing surgeon addresses how the goals of medicine frequently run counter to the interest of the human spirit. Doctors committed to extending life often carry out procedures that in the end extend the suffering of patients.

When Breath Becomes Air. Dr. Paul Kalanithi. Paul was in his final year of his neurosurgery residency at Stanford when he was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. The book is divided into two parts. First he addresses his journey to medical school and how his views changed during the struggles and experiences as a medical student. The second part deals with his experiences as a patient a role that many physicians have never experienced. His story deals with realizing why he chose to be a doctor and how important the physician is to patients.

The Cleveland Clinic Way. Dr. Tony Cosgrove. Written by the CEO of Cleveland Clinic who is a cardiothoracic surgeon. He looks at how health care can progress through group care settings instead of private organizations. It provides insight into what a well-functioning, patient centered health care organization looks like.

The DOs: Osteopathic Medicine in America. Norman Gevitz. The book documents how osteopathic medicine began and how it has evolved over the years.