Recommended Reading for Premedical Students

(for your infinite free time; revised August 2020)

All premedical students should read...

The AAMC website provides one-stop shopping for premedical students who want to learn more about the premed track and the medical school admissions process. Unlike other premed websites—that-shall-not-be-named, the AAMC website provides accurate, useful information that reduces premeds’ anxiety. Get started on your reading at https://students-residents.aamc.org.

The Osteopathic Medical College Information Book, published yearly by the AACOM, available at www.aacom.org, is essential reading for students who plan to apply to the osteopathic medical schools.

To prepare for applications and interviews, read...

Write for Success: Preparing a Successful Essay for Your Application to Health Professions School, by Evelyn Jackson and Harold Bardo, a book published by the NAAHP

Interviewing for Health Professions Schools, a pamphlet produced by the NAAHP

These NAAHP publications can be ordered online- see http://www.naahp.org/Publications/ for details.

Non-fiction books about life in medical school and residency:


Match Day: One Day and One Dramatic Year in the Lives of Three Young Doctors, by Brian Eule

Treatment Kind and Fair: Letters to a Young Doctor, by Perri Klass, M.D.

Non-fiction books about life as a physician:

In Shock: My Journey from Death to Recovery and the Redemptive Power of Hope, by Dr. Rana Awdish

Hope in Hell: Inside the World of Doctors Without Borders, by Dan Bertolotti

Another Day in the Frontal Lobe: A Brain Surgeon Exposes Life on the Inside, by Dr. Katrina Firlik

Inferno: A Doctor’s Ebola Story, by Steven Hatch, M.D.

Paradise General: Riding the Surge at a Combat Hospital in Iraq, by Dr. Dave Hnida

Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science, by Atul Gawande, M.D.

Better: A Surgeon’s Notes on Performance, by Atul Gawande, M.D.

The Measure of Our Days, by Jerome Groopman, M.D.

How Doctors Think, by Jerome Groopman, M.D.

The Blood of Strangers: Stories from Emergency Medicine, by Dr. Frank Huyler
When Breath Becomes Air, by Dr. Paul Kalanithi

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World, by Tracy Kidder

Six Months in Sudan: A Young Doctor in a War-Torn Village, by James Masalyk, M.D.

What the Eyes Don’t See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City, by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha

What Doctors Feel: How Emotions Affect the Practice of Medicine, by Danielle Ofri, M.D.

No Apparent Distress: A Doctor’s Coming-of-Age on the Front Lines of American Medicine, by Rachel Pearson, M.D.

That Good Night: Life and Medicine in the Eleventh Hour, by Sunita Puri, M.D.

Becoming Dr. Q: My Journey from Migrant Farm Worker to Brain Surgeon, by Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa, M.D. and Mim Eichler Rivas

God’s Hotel: A Doctor, A Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine, by Victoria Sweet, M.D., Ph.D.

Black Man in a White Coat: A Doctor’s Reflections on Race, by Damon Tweedy, M.D.

My Own Country: A Doctor’s Story of a Town and Its People in the Age of AIDS, by Abraham Verghese, M.D.

Non-fiction books about health science, health policy, health ethics, and health care reform:

Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine, Reimagining Life, by Louise Aronson, M.D.

Snake Oil Science: The Truth About Complementary and Alternative Medicine, by R. Barker Bausell

How We Do Harm: A Doctor Breaks Ranks About Being Sick in America, by Otis Wenn Brawley, M.D. with Paul Goldberg

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures, by Anne Fadiman

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End, by Atul Gawande, M.D.

Rigor Mortis: How Sloppy Science Creates Worthless Cures, Crushes Hope, and Wastes Millions, by Richard Harris

Health Care Reform: What It Is, Why It’s Necessary, How It Works, by Jonathan Gruber, with H.P. Newquist

The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer, by Siddartha Mukherjee, M.D.

Do You Believe in Magic? The Sense and Nonsense of Alternative Medicine, by Paul Offit, M.D.

The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care, by T.R. Reid
An American Sickness: How Healthcare Became Big Business and How you Can Take It Back, by Elizabeth Rosenthal

Trick or Treatment: The Undeniable Facts About Alternative Medicine, by Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst, M.D.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, by Rebecca Skloot

Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present, by Harriet A. Washington

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, by Isabel Wilkerson

Extreme Measures: Finding a Better Path to the End of Life, by Dr. Jessica Nutik Zitter

Interesting websites and blogs:

Atul Gawande, the surgeon and health care reform expert, is a frequent contributor to The New Yorker, and his work is always worth reading. His articles can be accessed at http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/bios/atul_gawande/search?contributorName=atul%20gawande.

The journal Health Affairs provides in-depth coverage of health care and health care delivery systems, and has its own blog, the Health Affairs Blog, available at healthaffairs.org/blog.

Kaiser Health News is a non-partisan, non-profit news service that provides timely, accurate, nonpartisan coverage of many aspects of American health care. See https://khn.org.

NPR has two interesting health-related blogs: its main health blog, Shots, is available at http://www.npr.org/blogs/health, and its Goats and Soda blog, which covers international health and public health issues, and is available at http://www.npr.org/blogs/goatsandsoda.

STAT News has timely, accurate, interesting articles on topics of interest to premeds ranging from medically relevant science to health policy. See https://www.statnews.com. Subscribing to one or more of their newsletters will keep you on top of their coverage.

Medscape, available at www.medscape.com, covers a wide variety of topics of interest to future physicians. You must subscribe, but subscribing is free.