

Personal Statement for Residency

My decision to become a physician was influenced by a powerful earthquake that struck a northern province of my country in 1990. At the time, I was a teenager and my father was a physician in the capital. I accompanied my father on a humanitarian mission to the area. I was shocked by the destruction caused by the natural disaster. Homes that lacked proper foundations were razed, injured people wandered aimlessly, and dead bodies lined the streets. As soon as we arrived, I immediately started to assist the relief effort by providing health care to the victims of the tragedy. I helped transport patients; clean, bathe, and feed those who needed assistance; and most significantly I observed my father and other physicians toil tirelessly to address the needs of the sick and injured. Although I was haunted by the graphic experience for many years to come, I was impressed with the notion of providing health care by any means necessary—an ideal I still ascribe to today. Subsequently, my resolve to become a physician drove me to excel on my nationwide entrance exams and garner a position as a medical student at a top university.

I realized my interest in internal medicine early on during the clinical portion of my medical school education. When performing a history and physical during my first internal medicine rotation, I encountered a patient with a clinical picture suggestive of anemia. After an exhaustive interview, I discovered that the patient suffered from pica ... She would eat a cup of dirt daily! I had just learned that pica is considered a symptom of iron-deficiency anemia. Follow-up CBC and iron studies confirmed that the patient did have an iron-deficiency anemia. My attending physicians were impressed with my investigative skills and I excelled on the rotation. More importantly though, I developed a deep appreciation for the power of a detailed history and physical and the intricate process of coming up with a relevant differential diagnosis.

After medical school, I was fortunate enough to obtain a visa to move to the U.S. and continue my training. I accepted a job as a medical assistant to an internist. Some of my employment experiences included performing history and physical examinations, accompanying my attending during in-patient rounds, and assisting with medical decision making. I was also fortunate enough to co-author a clinical case study that will soon be published in a reputable medical journal. Because of these work experiences, I not only gained a deeper understanding of internal medicine; but I also developed an appreciation of the American health care system.

I frequently reflect on my experiences during the earthquake. I imagine how much more I could have helped had I been trained as a physician at the time. I hope to never again witness the horrors of such destruction, but if I do, I plan to use my skills as a trained physician to ease the suffering of others. I look forward to continuing my training and wish to become the most compassionate and professional internist possible.