

High school students across various school districts in ██████ go to calculus, history, and soccer practice – but now they can also intern with the largest daily newspaper serving the metropolitan area. The ██████ *Post Gazette* internship allows students to enroll in a weekly course in preparation for future possible careers in journalism.

“I got to publish my own article as a 16-year-old! This semester long experience really exposed me to the field of journalism,” high school junior, ██████, said.

This is a hypothetical lead to my story – the story of what I would’ve wanted to become, if not a physician.

Growing up, I have always had an affinity for writing. I have stories to tell, I can create new realities, it gives a home to disconnected thoughts in my head, it is therapeutic – the list continues. A career in journalism would provide a platform to share my passion for writing while cultivating innovating stories with fresh perspectives.

But like many stories, things change; this is where my nut graf begins.

My passion for writing wasn’t singular, for it was always accompanied by my interest in the sciences. Much of the writing I do is subjective – it is based on interpretations, opinions, emotions, and judgment. But I am also drawn to the objectivity of science; it allows me to explore phenomena I see in nature, in a rational and logical manner. I often find myself reading various medically related books: Frank Vertosick’s “When the Air Hits your Brain,” Atul Gawande’s “Being Mortal,” or the assorted Robin Cook and Michael Crichton novels that bring the reader into captivating worlds of medical fiction.

So, why didn’t I become a medical journalist?

In the *Post Gazette* internship, I was required to compose a practice story about an interest of mine. Wanting to explore the field of medical journalism, I observed a knee arthroscopy with the intentions of creating a story about the procedure. I was in awe of the care, intricacy, and artistic ability that the surgeon possessed in completing the surgery. At that moment, I realized I didn’t want to write about these life-changing moments, rather, I wanted to help create them. I was inspired to explore what it means to be a physician.

Shadowing experiences, volunteering opportunities, and research in college led me conclude that medicine – among other things – is about healing, empathy, leadership, and above all, teaching. While journalism may not completely fulfill my desire for these gratifications, I believe the skills that I learned from writing have their place in medicine.

As a journalist, my task is to put together a compelling story – research background information, harmonize diverse sources of information from interviews, finding the perfect quote – all of which I must compile in a clear and logical manner. From my shadowing opportunities, I observed that medicine is not much different in this regard. Doctors must draw

information from patient interviews, physical exams, and lab tests in order to tell the patient's story in a compelling, concise, and logical manner.

The interviewing process in journalism provided me with the ability to talk to anyone – whether it be members of the Westboro Baptist Church or a prominent neurosurgeon innovating high-definition fiber tracking for brain imaging. These skills will help me build rapport with patients, allowing me to draw a more complete story and ultimately make the best possible diagnosis.

A journalists' duty is to listen to sources with no biases or preconceived notions – I have a responsibility to my sources to present their stories in the most accurate manner. A doctor's relationships with patients is also something that is not purely transactional – there are many complexities such as fears, pain, and compromise involved.

A story that will remain etched in my memory involves 24-year-old male, Andrew, who is an amputee. I got to know him quite well as I had to care for him throughout my long shifts. After enduring a dangerous car accident, Andrew had lost his right leg; he said it might have been more if it hadn't been for the meticulous care of his doctors.

He never failed to greet me with a smile and a list of things he aimed to do subsequent to his discharge, as I helped him with his activities of daily living. Even after his recent accident, Andrew remained positive; his medical care played a helping hand for his confidence. Though not all stories in medicine end so positively, I am passionate about helping and connecting with patients – to help write their resolution, so they can be hopeful about their future, much like Andrew is.

You see, I thought that I had to choose between journalism and medicine but I made this decision based on the literal career descriptions. In my mind, at their core, medical doctors are authors. They strive to create happy endings, when the exposition and climax are convoluted and anything but predictable.

My lead started off as an eager-to-be journalist – an experience that unexpectedly plunged me into the field of medicine. I am not quite sure where my lead will take me, as I am constantly humbled by what little I know in the ever-changing field of medicine. However, I am excited to continue writing my story as an aspiring future physician.