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### A Monstrous Journey into the Depths of Premedicine

The journey to deciding on and selecting premedical students as my subjects was surprisingly straightforward. I wanted to move out of my comfort zone, and dentists and doctors were two groups that I know I carry some negative stereotypes of. Then, I went to a club fair in early February, grabbed as many club fliers as I could, and emailed requests. Surprisingly there were almost ten such active organizations on campus, but most were dead ends. After almost a week of cold shoulder and dead-ends, one club, the American Medical Student Association, kindly (but reluctantly) welcomed me to their general and executive meetings.

I ended up collecting my data on these larval state doctors in a very topsy-turvy manner, partially due to extenuating circumstances and partially due to time conflicts with a class the slightly overlapped with the tail-end of AMSA's meetings. I first collected 1 month and a half worth of field notes, dated for each Wednesday ( Tejada, *Tales from the Depths of Premedicine!*). I then collected two anonymized interviews with two members of AMSA, the first who shall be referred to as Anonymous *FirstSubject*, and the second as Anonymous *SecondSubject*. I then collected two artifacts from the *American Medical Student Association*, and hunted for a few more on the /r/premed subreddit ( *u/twinkle1996* and *u/UdnomyaR*). Finally, I collected articles to fill in my gaps of knowledge, and used those articles for my literature review ( *Cooper* and *Olsen*). To be blunt, the stress level and the pressure I could detect from my in person observations were alarming, but the hunt for data on Reddit and the literature review solidified my views. Without a doubt, the medical school application cycle is a viscous monster. It eats innocent, wide eyed students, and leaves the carcasses of their dreams as the only remains.

## Portfolio Table of Contents

American Medical Student Association, Merced Chapter. “AMSA Store: Club T-Shirts and Pins!” *University of California, Merced* (12 May 2019). [Web](#).

**Annotation:** Showcasing their low key flair and earning MORE money from their members, AMSA both charges their members fees, and the t-shirts aren’t included. On the flip side, the t-shirts are nice, with official logos and art from their parent org.

Cooper, Melanie M. “The New MCAT: An Incentive for Reform or a Lost Opportunity?” *Journal of Chemical Education* 90.7 (2013): pp. 820–822. [Web](#).

**Annotation:** Cooper argues that the new 2015 revisions to the MCAT call for a system wide overhaul of how introductory and organic chemistry are taught. Cooper argues against following the Medical College Admissions Test learning guidelines, stating that instead the MCAT encourages a broken, mishmashed view of chemistry. Cooper ends on the note that the current circula fails to instill pattern recognition of chemical structures and resultant behaviors, but that catering to the new MCAT’s criteria will not fix this problem.

FirstSubject, Anonymous. “An Interview on their Ending Premedical Path with Edgar Tejada”. *University of California, Merced* (9 Apr. 2019). Print.

**Annotation:** FirstSubject, a graduating premed on their way to a certain medical school, and Tejada discussed the motivations, obstacles, moral questions, and pitfalls premedstudents face.

Olsen, Lauren D. “‘It’s on the MCAT for a Reason’: Premedical Students and the Perceived Utility of Sociology”. *Teaching Sociology* 44.2 (2016): pp. 72–83. [Web](#).

**Annotation:** Olsen argues for the continued importance of Sociology classes and the humanities component of the new, 2015 MCAT. Olsen argues that if doctors are trained with only science and reductionist biochemistry, they will be unable to introspect on their societal roles, or worse, be unable to treat their patients with human dignity.

SecondSubject, Anonymous. “An Interview on their Beginning Premedical Path with Edgar Tejada”. *University of California, Merced* (1 May 2019). Print.

**Annotation:** SecondSubject, a freshman premed on their way to their sophomore year, and Tejada discussed the motivations, obstacles, moral questions, and pitfalls premed students face in the early years, as well as the cause of the high rates of dropout.

Tejada, Edgar. *Beyond the Scope*. 20 May 2019. [Web](#).

**Annotation:** Tejada extended his observation into the belly of a certain upper division biology class, with permission from the professor. Tejada took notes on the behavior of premed students in the thick of academic rigor, but did not interact with them.

—. *Tales from the Depths of Premedicine!* 20 May 2019. [Web](#).

**Annotation:** Tejada observed and interacted with premedical students in their natural habitat, weekly AMSA meetings on Wednesday nights. Tejada noted conflicts regarding academic honesty in a certain upper division biology class, but also recorded amazing insight into the arduous path to doctorhood.

u/twinkle1996. “App cycle is not fun at all”. *Reddit* (12 May 2019). [Web](#).

**Annotation:** u/twinkle1996 laments on their troubles during this application cycle by comparing themselves to thrown away, discarded Tellytubbie toy.

u/UdnomyaR. “A big shout-out to reapplicants who’ve been improving their applications after getting rejected”. *Reddit* (22 Apr. 2019). [Web](#).

**Annotation:** u/UdnomyaR applauds all reapplicants who went through and the medical school application cycle more than one via potent and ‘dank’ spongebob memes.