

EXPECTATION VS REALITY

LIFE OF A MED SCHOOL STUDENT

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We often have this preconceived picture of a medical student's rigorous lifestyle with no sign of recreation at all. However, living under the same roof as one member of this widely speculated species, I have come across quite a few misconceptions which I myself used to possess. In the light of my new discoveries, I'd like to share some of them with you by comparing the myths with their counterparts.

Expectation: Bumping into McDreamy on your very first day.

Reality: If you want to pursue this

Expectation: Alarming absence of a social life.

Reality: While this may vary according to people, most med students I've come across have a rather vibrant social life. Now the question may arise: "How do they do it?" Med school students are like hibernating bears in winter - certain times a year, better known as "exam season", they vanish out of sight for months but when they do return, they're the friendliest social butterflies ready to indulge in immaculate adventures with their loved ones. Then they are often seen outside their natural habitat, in rather ordinary attire, celebrating the gift of weekends with friends and family.

Expectation: Running cool tests on patients, all the while looking intellectually accomplished.

Reality: Students are often assigned scut work and expected to show up almost every day after class running tests which probably make them rethink their life choices on a daily basis. The sheer amount of will needed to carry on with this ridiculous routine is indeed worthy of high praise. However, there is an upside. As running rectal exams on strangers and handling stool samples soon become their definition of a regular Thursday night, they find themselves immune to any kind of "crap" life throws at them, thereby becoming "untouchable". In conclusion, doctors are the real heroes without capes because if this isn't the closest we can get to immortality, I don't know what is.

Expectation: Assisting on sophisticated surgeries.

Reality: Most days they find themselves standing through a 7-hour long procedure, wishing they had adult diapers on to relieve their bladders from their suffering, vowing to not drink that extra litre of water on such days in the future, all the while staring seamlessly at another person's intestines. They develop a new found appreciation for the phenomena of muscle flexing as they find themselves deprived of even the slightest movements during their assisting hours. Other days, however, witnessing miracles like birth or seeing smiles on the family's faces after they've heard that their loved ones are okay, reminds them of why it is all worthwhile.

Expectation: Sanity will be salvaged.

Reality: These students unconsciously let go of sanity sooner than they ever expected. If you live with one you'll know better than to walk into their room unannounced if you don't want to see them walking around with a skull in one hand and a book in the other, most likely on the night before a dreaded exam, and rethink your affiliation with him/her entirely. Moreover, they can often be seen cussing at TV screens whenever anything resembling an injury pops up. This should serve as a cue for you to leave the room before they start throwing medical tantrums consisting of complex tongue-bending terms that make you feel that much dumber for not being able to comprehend.

In conclusion, studying in medical school is hard but for people who learn how to do it right, it becomes less of an ordeal and more of an everyday stepping stone in achieving the ultimate goal of making a difference for the better.

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Expectation: Sleep deprivation- a normal way of life.

Reality: While most may seem to disagree, it is actually quite possible to not have to give away your precious sleep in order to become a doctor. Personally I have witnessed these beings possessing enough free time, not only to sleep, but also watch re-runs of *How to Get Away with Murder*, watch 3-hour long movies of no particular genre, read books that don't contain descriptions of human faeces and swipe through Facebook news feed for eternity. All of this serves to state: yes they do act like normal human beings occasionally.



Here's a picture of my social life while in medical school.

profession based on your knowledge of how *Grey's Anatomy* portrays it to be, don't. Safe to say students don't experience encounters with any McDreamies in their time there be it on their first day, week or even year. You may, however, have to get used to cringeworthy puns like "ICU in my dreams" or depressing poetry like "Blood is red, cyanosis is blue, I get tachycardia when I think of you" from a rather intellectual group of creeps. It is ironic how most TV dramas comprise of the medical profession whereas in real life, doctors seem least likely to indulge in that. As a result, if drama is what you crave, you might as well join a business school (trust me).

