

# **Medical School Interviews**

**Questions Contributed By Students From  
Universities Across Canada**



**Compiled at the Learning Centre  
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## **Completed Questionnaires for University of Alberta**

*Taken from: <http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>*

- Do you think patients should be referred to as clients or customers?
- How would you manage your time as a family physician in a rural setting?
- Something about Monica Lewinsky.
- There were lots of ethical scenarios with “what ifs” added on.
- Three wishes? Other interviews? How many schools applied to? Favorite course?
- What do you think about chromosomal abnormalities in the fetus?
- If you could have any three people, alive or dead, over for dinner, who would they be?
- If you worked for a pharmaceutical company, and found out a certain drug had a possibility, but only a possibility, of harming people, would you breach your confidentiality and risk your job?
- What would you do if the student next to you was cheating on a test? What if he/she was your best friend?
- Federal government has just given the provinces money for health care. How would you distribute it? How would you deal with hot political issues (e.g. waiting lists)?
- Describe the role of the pharmacist in a hospital.
- A very broad question on the recent funding increase in the 1999 budget and what I would do to distribute funds.
- The province of B.C. is now charging for physicals. Do I agree with it and why?
- Do you think medicine is a business?
- I felt they were really trying to make sure you had thought A LOT about becoming a physician. About 5 ethical “scenarios”: including abortion, assisted suicide, AIDS. Stick with your answer; they try and sway you by adding a lot of “what if this,” to your answer.
- How do you cope with your stress?
- Why medicine, why here...?
- If you found out you were HIV+, would you still practice?
- If you were the Minister of Health, how would you improve health care and lower the costs?
- Are we doing enough for women’s issues?

## **Completed Questionnaires for University of British Columbia (CAN)**

*<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>*

- What would you say to the Selection Committee about why you would be a good candidate for medical school?
- What would you do if you had an 80 year-old guy on a respirator and a 16 year-old required one desperately? (i.e. you had no other respirators available). Follow-up questions to your answer (i.e. would you pull the 80 year-old off the respirator? How would you make your decision?)
- Name four types of ethical conflicts you might face as a physician.
- Know your ethics-I was asked at least two ethical questions by each interviewer.
- Tell me about yourself. Why have you chosen the combined program, what qualities do you have that would make you a good researcher, clinician, teacher, etc?
- What happened in Bulgaria this summer? (Be up on current events)
- Name a country that you do not want to be in.

- What do you think of the Hep C dispute and what do you think would constitute a fair compensation package?
- Scenario: A patient is diagnosed with incurable cancer and wants your help in ending her suffering (i.e. death). What do you tell her?
- Who is your favorite author?
- If you were in charge, how would you distribute the funding for various aspects of health care programs?
- Who is the Lieutenant Governor of BC?
- Compare the health care systems of US, Canada and any other country.
- How would you counsel a family who wished aggressive treatment for a terminally ill/non-competent patient?
- If you were me, what would you be asking and what am I asking wrong?
- What happened in the Middle East in 1956?
- A patient calls you on a Friday afternoon with a seemingly legitimate problem as you're driving to Whistler. What do you do? He calls again the next week; what do you do? The next week?
- What was the toughest decision you've ever had to make? What's the most interesting thing you've done in the past 3-4 years?
- Would you resuscitate someone who had requested a "do not resuscitate" in a living will because they had AIDS, but who subsequently had a heart attack in your office?
- If you had to build a kidney dialysis machine, how do you think you would do it?

### **Completed Questionnaires For University of Calgary (CAN)**

*<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>*

- Describe an experience in which you disappointed someone. How did this affect you?
- Give us an example of a strong belief or opinion that you held that eventually changed. What inspired the change?
- Tell us a joke or an amusing anecdote.
- What do you think about herbal medicine? Euthanasia, DNR, doctor-assisted suicide... What would you do if a masters' student who didn't pass her defense, accused her supervisor of sexual assault?
- If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
- How would you have acted if you were the doctor to a 13 year old with cancer who was recently ordered by the court to undergo treatment?
- Tell me about yourself. What do you think your referees said?
- What is your leadership style?
- When was a time you failed something?
- How do others see you?
- Where do you see yourself in 15 years?
- What is one quality that you think (hope) that others see in you?
- What do you think the role of humor is in medicine?
- Have you ever been ashamed of anything and how did you resolve this problem?
- Hypothetical Scenario: your friend fails out of University and she soon after stated publicly that the underlying reason is that she was sexually harassed by her supervisor. How would you go about handling this situation?
- What do you think the difference is between being assertive and being combative.

- How do you think restructuring of Alberta's health care will affect you personally?
- Do you think Canadian Health Care is two-tiered? What position do you usually take on a team? Do you depend on anyone?
- Why medicine, why Calgary, what about today's health care, etc etc etc, why did I take the route I did to get here?
- Why do you want to be a doctor? Name a weakness.
- Tell me about your relationship with your mother.
- Why did you get married?

### **Completed Questionnaires for Dalhousie University (CAN)**

*<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>*

- What do you see as being some of the ethical issues that will be faced, in the future, in light of the vast array of medical technologies that are becoming available (I had indicated a real interest in ethical issues?).
- Do you think that doctors and the medical profession have a greater community responsibility to aid with issues like poverty, domestic violence, etc.
- Describe a personal bias/prejudice and comment on how you will overcome this in medicine.
- What kind of medicine do you want to study?
- How is health care in Canada improving? What would your friends say about you?
- If you have a cancer patient who wants to try an herbal med instead of regular meds, what do you do?
- Lots asked about two-tiered health care, and my weaknesses.
- If you were federal Health Minister and had access to unlimited funding for health care, what three avenues would you choose to allocate those funds to?
- A woman is being fed intravenously through a feeding tube and her husband wants the tube removed. How do you handle the situation?
- What are three major health issues facing women today?
- How do you think your friends would describe you?
- What was the most difficult thing that you've gone through?
- Lots on health care funding, two-tier system, abortion ethics, pre-natal screening, human genome project, etc.
- Can you give me a topical health care issue that is unique to the Maritime region?
- How would you approach a student in your group, if that student was less mature and not focused on his or her work?
- A man diagnosed with an STD tells you it was contracted from an affair and he does not want you to tell his wife, even though she is a patient of yours as well. What would you do? As an addendum, what do you think of mandatory government reporting of HIV+ tests?
- If you were President of the US how would you respond to Dr. Seed, in Chicago, who wants to clone hundreds of humans every year?
- How would you rectify the problems with our health care?
- Who would you want to talk to from any point in history, what would you ask and what would the response be?

- Role Play: I was asked to role play a situation in which I was 14 year old girl who wanted to have an abortion. I am profiled and the interview appealed to every pro-abortion reason in the book. I was also challenged on active vs. passive euthanasia.
- If you felt that a member of your problem-based learning group wasn't pulling his/her weight, how would you deal with the problem?
- Usual questions on medical ethics, cloning, and health care funding in Canada.
- If I could bring one person from history to dinner, who would it be and why?
- Identify and provide a possible solution to a current ethical debate.
- Why do you want to be a physician?
- Would you give assistance to a terminal cancer victim who wants to die?

### **Completed Questionnaires for University of Manitoba (CAN)**

*<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>*

- How do you rate yourself in terms of being judgmental?
- Pretend you are a 35 year old native male living on a reserve. You've just had a heart attack and are being medivac'd to HSC. What thoughts are going through your mind?
- Who would you go to dinner with?
- What are all the reasons people have varying degrees of health? Now come up with another one.
- If you were a travel agent, how would you entice people to come to Winnipeg?
- They ask about some American politics, i.e. Bill Clinton-Lewinsky.
- How do you feel about Dr. 's going on strike?
- Tell me about yourself, why do you want to come here, how do you deal with stress, what was your first job, how do you deal with conflicts at work, and a whole bunch of situational ethic type questions e.g.: if you are a 4<sup>th</sup> year med student on rounds...etc
- Mother Theresa and a 15 year old criminal are in need of a respirator to live, but only one respirator is available, who do you give it to and why?
- Was justice done in the Nancy Morrison case? Do you foresee any major problems in health care, what affect will they have on you in 10 years and what can we do today to alleviate those problems.
- How do you feel about the legalization of marijuana for either therapeutic or recreational use?
- What would you suggest could be done to alleviate some of the problems found on aboriginal reserves?
- Who were my idols or heroes?
- If you could go out to dinner with someone who is no longer living, who would it be and what would you talk about?
- What is the first thing you would do if you were practicing in an Indian Reserve?
- What would you do to save money in the health care system?

## Completed Questionnaires for McGill University (CAN)

<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>

- Why do you want to work in Montreal?
- My take on current health care trends, etc.
- Are there any ethical issues you want to discuss?
- What would you do if were the Health Minister?
- Tell me about someone you've read about who you admire.
- What accomplishment or activity are you most proud of?
- One interviewer asked me to role-play a doctor while he was a patient.
- What undergraduate major I completed and why?
- Have you ever contributed to the growth of a firm?
- How would your friends describe you?
- How are you emotionally prepared for the difficulties of medicine?
- If I were the Canadian Health Minister, how would I fund medical research?
- Why do you want to be a doctor, why PhD, which one of MD and PhD do you think is more significant for you, etc?
- How do you think the government controls the way in which the physician practices medicine?
- How would you fix the U.S. health care situation?
- What issues pertaining to medicine do you wish to discuss?
- You seem to be an intense person. How do you deal with that?
- Why would you come here from the US?
- Comment on the difference/opinion on Canada/US health care system.
- What do you think of the Canadian health care system?
- Be sure to know why you want to be a doctor.
- How do you feel prepared to deal with the power involved with your role after you complete this joint degree?
- What do you think of the two-tier health care system? What do you see about the future of computers in the field of medicine?
- Martin Luther King's killer needs a liver transplant...so does some well-respected celebrity. Should the criminal have to wait longer in the case of a shortage? Where should the line be drawn?
- What did you think are the qualities that make you social?
- Who should be the leader of the health care team and why?
- Tell me what you know about the health-care system in Quebec.
- What do you think of the U.S. and Canadian systems of health care delivery?
- What do you think of the Canadian Health care system?
- Why weren't you accepted last year?
- Why should we "let you" become a doctor?

## Completed Questionnaires for McMaster University (CAN)

<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>

- If the ambulance bay is very busy and you are the only physician available, there are 2 patients who both need your immediate attention, what would you do?

- Tutorial 1: Given info that dead beat parents are mainly fathers. Government wants to find a way to deal with it. One option is to withhold payment of cheques, or to revoke license renewal.
- Tutorial 2: A surgeon sees a patient who had a heart problem due to strong drug abuse. He treats her and she comes back one week later with the same problem again. He suspects she is abusing drugs again. Halfway through the treatment, she says she has to leave because of personal problems. The surgeon says “If she comes back, I will not treat her.”
- “If I (as an interviewer) approached your friends, how would they complete the following sentence: [the applicant] is a great person but\_.....?”
- What was your greatest failure in life, and what did you learn from it? Although it is not easy to answer a potentially embarrassing question like this, I think it is better to be honest.
- What role do you see the physician taking on in the health care environment? (*type of leadership, interactions with others etc.*)
- How is art important to medicine?
- What is something that you did that you are not proud of?
- If you were told that medicine is a male dominated profession, as a woman, how would you deal with it?
- How does the role of the physician differ between Canada and the States?
- How do you deal with life?
- What have you done outside of education that you feel really good about?
- What weaknesses do you have in which a group atmosphere can help out?
- Who are your heroes and why?
- Tell us who you are.
- How will you know once you have completed the program that you are a good doctor?
- What is the most creative thing you have done in the past two years?
- What was your biggest disappointment in the past five years, and what did you learn from it?
- If your mother had Alzheimer’s and required care, how would you deal with it?
- Have you ever failed at anything? And if so, what?
- Why do you want to be a doctor?
- What’s one thing that you’ve done that you’ve absolutely hated and would never do again?
- Are you intelligent and how do you compare yourself with others around you?
- Why do you want to go into medicine with an already successful career in another health care profession?
- What is the greatest social injustice in our country today?
- How does morality fit into medicine?

### **Completed Questionnaires for University of Ottawa (CAN)**

<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>

- Patient has diabetes. He refuses to take medication and is thus in the hospital frequently. What do you do?
- Role playing: Suppose you get accepted into medical school on the condition that upon graduation you have to practice family medicine in a rural area. However, halfway through your education, you find you hate rural medicine. What do you do?

- How would you describe the conflict between religion and science?
- How would I deal with a child whose family, for religious reasons, refused chemotherapy treatment for a terminal cancer in favor of non-conventional alternatives?
- How do you justify bombing in Kosovo?
- Given unlimited power, how would you solve the homeless problem?
- Last book read?
- What do you do for fun?
- Why do you want to be a doctor?
- Ethical dilemma: 12 year old daughter of a friend of mine asks for birth control pills.
- How would I change the interview if I could?
- What would your friends say about you? What sets you apart from the other 600 interviewees?
- Why do I want to become a physician? Strengths? weaknesses?
- The case of the lung transplant patient at Toronto Hospital who couldn't have the transplant because there was no bed available in ICU. Imagine that you were the director of the Toronto Hospital. What would I do to ensure that this doesn't happen again?
- How do you keep yourself informed about what is going on in the world?
- Should doctors be a role model? (They also tried to clarify what I was saying) (*i.e. why did you choose that activity, what do you mean by that?*)
- With more open free trade, don't you think the "have-nots" will revolt against the "haves"?
- Compare the violence in Kosovo and Ireland to the manner in which the British slaughtered the Africans during the time of the Imperial Empire.
- How would I handle the problems encountered with the elderly in last year's ice storm (*i.e. elderly who did not want to leave their houses even though remaining was life-threatening*).
- What would I do if a patient I had been working with committed suicide?
- Being a woman, how would I manage my schedule between my practice, administrative duties, and a family life?
- What would I say to Health authorities at the government level for how to go about sex education in high schools, alleviating teenage pregnancies, HIV awareness?
- First impression is very important.
- What are the attractions and/or benefits of family practice in a rural/small town setting? What are the drawbacks?
- What would someone who doesn't like me have to say about me?
- What is your opinion on the legalization of marijuana in Canada?
- Why medicine?
- How do you feel about bill c-40?
- How did you feel about the verdict of the Kardil vs. Toronto 1962 case? Also known as the street vigilante vs. city hall case.
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses, talk about a favorite holiday, and relate personal experiences to practice of medicine...
- Ethical dilemma involving a 13 year old girl who wanted an abortion (her father impregnated her).
- How did working with victims of torture shape my view of humanity—from a philosophical, or moral perspective?
- I was asked to conduct some part of the interview in French, which drew upon a pretty rusty knowledge from high school French immersion.



- Playing in a rock band, would you leave it to practice medicine in rural areas (no music store)?
- How do you feel about oral sex?
- What would you do if a female patient absolutely refused to let you examine her? What would you do if you received a letter stating that the same woman is about to request a hearing into your alleged misconduct, forcing her to disrobe and be examined.
- Why do both the liberals and the conservatives want to revamp/abolish bill C40?
- How do you propose to juggle a marriage, a practice and a clinical research lab?

### **Completed Questionnaires for Queen's University (CAN)**

*<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>*

- What did you think of the OJ Simpson case?
- What would Toronto offer you over us?
- Do you think that music has a place in medicine as a therapy?
- Describe what you thought a typical day of your life would be like ten years from now.
- What world event in the past ten years has had the most personal significance for you?
- They asked me about the book I was reading at the time, we had a really engaging conversation about the book and its impacts.
- Opinion type questions mainly. They asked me about Kosovo, and what I thought were ethical issues in medicine, but that was about it.
- When have you succeeded in something that you weren't interested in doing?
- What is your opinion on the state of health care?
- Give an example of a negative role model in your life. (i.e.-you would do things differently from them).
- What are you most proud of?
- What of your many achievements are you proudest of?
- They asked lots of questions about favorite books, imaginary trips...
- There were a lot of open-ended, and very broad questions. For example, when are you the happiest?
- Most questions are directed at getting to know you as a person... whether you're GENUINELY friendly, caring, motivated, committed to medicine, and well-spoken.
- What accomplishments made you the most proud and satisfied?
- What books have you read?
- What kind of things should the doctor-patient relationship entail? You will definitely be asked to talk about some current issues in health care and possibly some ethical questions as well.
- What comic strip character do you consider yourself to be most like?
- What problems do you see in the city of Toronto?
- If you can invite three people over to dinner and get to know them, who would they be and why?
- There were quite a few ethical questions.
- Seeing that you will be in a class of 75 A-type personalities and that you may not be able to get the leadership positions that you are used to, what do you see as your role as a member of the med school class?
- What has been the most important advance or achievement in the world over the past twenty years (your lifetime)?

- Give an example of a situation in which you failed, how you dealt with it, and how you were impacted by it.
- Pretend that you're Quebecois from a small village in Quebec. Present and explain to us your reasons for wanting to separate from the rest of Canada.
- Interview took place just after the Canadian federal election. Being from the west coast, I was asked what I thought of the newly appointed Minister of Fisheries, and if I didn't like him who I would appoint instead.
- What do you do for social activities?
- If you were to cut the health care (downsize), how would you do it?
- What changes would you make to medicine in the future?
- If you could invite three people to dinner from any time in history who would you invite and why?
- What was the strangest thing you have ever done?
- What do you think is the biggest problem facing Canadian Health Care today?
- If you could invite three people for dinner, who would they be? And what would you serve?
- In your days of teaching, what was the most significant experience you had with a student?
- You seem to have a lot of solitary pursuits. How will you handle the demands of being around people all the time?

### **Completed Questionnaires for University of Saskatchewan (CAN)**

<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>

- Have you watched any of the movies nominated for an Academy Award?
- What is the solution to rural health care in the face of declining population? What was a conflict you have been involved in and how did you resolve it?
- You are having a dinner party. Name three people you would invite. Why? Also, who is your hero and why?
- What are your views on alternative medicine?
- Comment on a current scientific issue. Ex: discuss cloning.

### **Completed Questionnaires for University of Toronto (CAN)**

<http://interviewfeedback.com/cgi-bin/questionnaire.pl/browse>

- Do you think there should be female priests?
- Your essay is very impressive. You must be aware of the many resources on the Internet. Certainly, there are sites with samples of "ideal" medical school applications. What do you think of this? (*Note: this topic was dwelled on for at least 20 minutes*)
- Have you ever worked in a group? How would you handle various conflicts that arise in a group situation?
- Role Play: You are in a private clinic working with another physician. You suspect this other physician is having alcohol problems and you have seen that he has put patient (s) lives at risk. What would you do? (*I said I would confront him, but then the interviewer kept pressing me saying what if the colleague ignored me or threaten to sue me.*)

- Tell me about yourself. What are your strong points and weak points? Case Scenario: A patient is suffering from acute hypertension. You advise her to take medication. Instead, she requests that you lower the blood pressure by opening some of her veins. What would you do?
- Case Scenario: A patient's family requests that no treatment is given to a dying, incompetent patient? Explore the issue.
- What three individuals would you like to meet and why?
- What is AIDS?
- Asked about a book I had read recently.
- A question about what med students can do to improve the difficult economic situations in medicine today.
- What three books would you rank as classics?
- What is the most pressing social issue today?
- How would you feel if the government put doctors on salary?
- What would you do if your friend told you he had committed incest?
- What would you do if a patient did not want treatment, and if without this treatment he would die?
- What my best friend would say my three worst qualities were.
- Do you think that there should be condom machines installed in Inner City Toronto schools? What would you do if your colleague/friend had a drug problem? Would you perform patient-assisted suicide?
- How do you feel about Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue selling so many copies? How do you feel about the fact that women are now allowed to go topless at the beach?
- They asked me an ethical question about medical expenses for elite athletes.
- What has been your biggest disappointment in life?
- In the recent books you have read, which character most closely resembles you and why?
- How do we get more doctors up north (a lot of what ifs such as what if they don't want to go, etc...) and also questions about how organs should be distributed (e.g. By need, by age, etc).
- If you had to describe proper nutrition and exercise to a large waiting room full of people and you had a limited amount of time, how would you do it?
- What is your greatest weakness and how will that have an impact on your patients?
- How would you feel about adopting a two-tier medical system in Ontario?
- Your patient confides that she just killed her husband, what would you do?
- *(They asked a lot of ethical questions that were not difficult to answer but they kept adding "what ifs..." trying to see if I would change my stance.)*
- Role-Play: You are the doctor and the interviewer was a doctor who came to see you in your office because he was very recently diagnosed with cancer. You had to show how you would deal with this type of situation. However, he kept on making the situation harder by telling me that he could not deal with cancer, that he had seen many of his patients succumb to cancer and that he didn't want to be a burden on his family/wife etc. I had to be compassionate and supportive throughout. The situation ended with him asking me if I could prescribe him sleeping pills (I think he was hinting euthanasia at the end).
- Who gets the operation if 10 people need it immediately but only 2 can be performed immediately?
- What would you say to a patient who really wanted to have a certain treatment but you believe he doesn't need it?
- How would you address the issue of cost in health care?

## Memorial University of Newfoundland Medical School Interview #1

*Student Impressions Directly After the Interview*

My first thought after I exited the room was “well, I didn’t blow it, but I sure as hell didn’t nail the door shut either.” The interview was rather informal, or so I was told by the others who went before me. But considering that it was the first interview of any sort that I had taken, I was fairly taken by it all. The questions were of a rather personal and vague type...*for example, tell us a little about yourself (upon asking for clarification I was told to “tell us what you have been up to in the last while”). They asked about my history (family, life in the valley, what my teen years were like). They asked about my present school involvement (I left out some!!!). They asked about my future and that’s where I ran into the brick wall. For example, they asked me “What kind of world do you see in 10 years?”, “What problems will Dr.’s, specifically, have to face?”, “Outside Canada’s borders, what will happen in the next 10 years?” This is where I got the puzzled face look...the “tell us more look”...the “you better do better on the next one” look.*

They also asked about problem-solving...how I worked in groups, how I resolved difficulties, why I wanted to be a doctor, and not specifically my strengths and weaknesses, but there was lots of space to fill them in on those. Most of the questions I prepared for were not there, at least not in the way that I prepared. Really, preparation was not needed. I could have talked about family life, youth years, secondary school, friends, university, work, involvement, interests, and that stuff without even thinking of it much.

Anyway, you would not believe the TALENT that was competing for these places: 60 total...15 Americans (from whom they can pull \$30,000 a term), 5 from the rest of Canada and the world, and 40 Newfs! That’s a good ratio for our school, but for those 40 seats, there were 120 interviews! The good news is that I was interviewed in the first week (they say that’s good), and also, there were people there for their 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> interview! (Good and bad, I guess). But the talent! I was up against practicing counseling psychologists, professional engineers who helped build the Hibernia rig in Bull Arm, practicing pharmacists who wanted a change, and students with two (and one I knew of with three) degrees! It was amazing, a whole new world and a whole new group of people to compete with. These were the best that Newfoundland had to offer...and although I don’t quite meet the qualifications of some of those mentioned above (and there were, I hope, some others like me), I was part of a group of elite. IF ONLY FOR AN HOUR!

And now I have to wait again. They don’t let you know until May or June. More stress. The whole process is a stress bag...from the undergraduate studies, to the application, to the MCAT exam, to the interview, to the waiting, and then into the school. But if I don’t get in I’ll realize why (given the talent that was interviewed). 120 people for 40 seats...that’s 33.33% just by chance...too bad they weren’t pulling our names out of hats! But in all seriousness, if you get the chance to guide any other people interested in Medicine, tell them the interview is not stressful once you get in there. They offer water, small chat, and tell you it’s not a test, they want to get to know you and you can’t really prepare.

You can put some thought into the things I said above, and into health politics and try to impress then by throwing something about that at them, but don’t try too hard to impress them. They don’t have your MCAT marks, your transcript, your essays or application. They just want to see if you can speak logically, and to find out something about your background...not necessarily what you might think is pertaining to med, but you as a total person and your achievements in all areas, your work habits, and the like.

Now, the next question is what do you do when you have invested over \$1000 in the interview process alone (not to mention the applications and MCATs) and you don’t get in! That’s the thing that stresses me. Too bad the school or government wouldn’t offer some support for things like that...even if it was in the form of student loans. Financially, this whole process has wiped me out...and then if I do get in...well, I won’t even think of that now.

## **Memorial University of Newfoundland Medical School Interview #2**

The following is a list of questions that were asked to me by the admissions committee at my interview this May. These are not the questions that I recalled today as I was writing, but rather are from the list I made immediately after the interview had concluded.

My interview was broken into three sections. First they were interested in my childhood/younger years and how I got to the point in my life where I was attending an interview for Med School. Then they asked questions specific to my life now and why I chose medicine and the expectations of that decision. Finally, they asked about the future and where I was hoping to go. They actually tell you at the beginning that they are going to break the interview up this way and there are no right or wrong answers. They tell you to relax and that they just want to get to know you, and although this my sound cliché, and despite the fact that you are stressed beyond belief, that is exactly how you have to approach the interview. It should be about talking to a couple of buddies about why you choose Med School and where you want to go.

The first time I took the interview, I had prepared answers to what I thought they would ask. Some of the questions I had prepared for were asked, but my responses were obviously rehearsed, they knew it and so did I, and that's probably why I was not successful. You should advise anyone who might ask you that it is not meant to be a stressful, formal interview where they drill you and try to weed out the weak. It is very much the opposite and if you know that before you enter and prepare accordingly, you will have much more success.

One thing I did differently this time around and which I think really made for me was to spend a few hours putting together what was called a "Skills & Abilities" sheet. Try to find 4 or 5 of your main strengths and then think of every example of this particular skill you can, especially the ones that might relate to medicine. For example, I used Interpersonal Ability, Critical Thinking, Team Work, Love of helping, and Rural Experience. After putting together a simple list of examples for each of these, I did memorize those five headings, but the examples just seemed to fall in place at the interview since I had looked it over a few times. It's not the same as rehearsed answers. It's more like focusing your attention on your strengths and possible weaknesses, figuring out exactly why you consider that a strength, and then find a clear way of letting others know. Almost as importantly, don't be afraid to brag! When the cards were all played, I had to be more impressive than at least 2 other candidates (120 interviews only 40 spots, so 1 in 3 got in).

Also important in the case of MUN is the whole "rural" idea. Everyone is aware of the trouble attracting doctors to rural areas. No one is more aware than the Admissions Committee. They will likely expect every single candidate that they are interested in going back to a small outpost to practice because they are aware of the problem and have a desire to make a difference...but this is all bull if you can't provide something more. If you have rural experience, explain it and describe your hometown and how you loved it (if you indeed did). But if you try to fake it, they will know because they will pop you with a "control question" to see just how much you do indeed know about rural life in Newfoundland (i.e. explain the difference between your hometown and the city in terms of the relationships that develop and the closeness of those relationships).

Anyway, after they're finished with the three sections, they generally ask a few general questions about medicine or may present you with a situation and ask for your reaction. Don't try to be an expert on medical ethics or global health care issues. A general knowledge of some of the problems or challenges will do. And if worse comes to worse, just say "I really have not had any experiences with..." or, "I really don't have enough background to comment on the issue of..." and say something like "but I am very interested in...and hope to have the opportunity to study it more". You can't be afraid to not have an answer. If you are not sure, tell them. It's better to admit some weaknesses than to try to bull your way through, and now that I think of it, perhaps

they intentionally give you something you would likely have no idea about as a kind of test to see if you can indeed admit a gap in your knowledge.

So, after that long introduction, here is a list of the questions that I was asked this time around, and also some that I do remember from the first time where they didn't ask me the same things. They are not necessarily in groups (like the three sections of the interview).

1. *Tell us about yourself. (What was life like?).* This question puzzled me the first time around as I wondered what they were looking for. But it's as simple as it sounds. They only want to get to know you and see if you can put together a few sentences; whether you are personable. Talk about your childhood, family, elementary/secondary school, university, and what you are up to now.
2. *What was adolescence like?* Same type of idea as in question #1.
3. *What are you doing now and are you satisfied?* Pretty straightforward. Tell them what you are doing (school/work) and give the impression that you are reasonably satisfied, but that you are looking for more challenge and want to pursue higher goals.
4. *Do you have any regrets about decisions that you have made in your life?* Again straight forward! They might ask you about a particular situation where you had to make a major decision and how you went about it. They seemed to be looking for your thinking/evaluating ability and if you could work through a problem situation.
5. *What do you think makes a good doctor?* Straight forward! But I emphasized the interpersonal aspect of coming from a psychology background. If you are confident in your speaking ability, you could stick in the whole "wellness" idea and how it involves good practitioners but also good listeners and empathetic care givers.
6. *What do you do for fun/extracurricular activities?* You have to have some way to handle your stress, because you will likely have a lot once you start the course. It also makes sense to have someone who is not "only" into the books and the work, but a more rounded person, socially, physically.
7. *What are some of your strengths/weaknesses?* This is the most direct place to put in your "Strengths and Abilities" work. Keep talking until they redirect you if you have to. It's better to have them hear all about why they should take you than to leave the room without letting them know you are a good candidate.
8. *Do you have a role model?* This can be a particular doctor, but don't make one up. Parents are as good as any other example. I used my mom! But whoever you use, be able to say why...are they are hard workers, do they have qualities that you like and want to develop yourself?
9. *What do you expect to get from this school? What do you think you might be able to give to the school?* You have a chance to put a personal element into the interview and what the school means to you. If you are from Newfoundland, it helps and you can use the "I'm proud to be a Newf" bit! Talk about the challenge, the excitement, the fun, and even the chance to make a good career and living for yourself because of the school. But do not dwell on the career/money thing. Also, look for what you might have to offer them (i.e. I used research as an example).
10. *Where do you hope to be in 10 years? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?* Pretty personal and straight forward. Be honest and tell them that you hope to be practicing, married with kids if that turns your crank!
11. *What are some of the problems facing doctors and the health care system in Newfoundland today? In other parts of the world outside North America? In the next century?* Again, they don't want you to be an expert. But generally, the fiscal situation and threats to universal and adequate health care seem to be the bare minimum they expect you to be aware of. If you have some more specific knowledge about the situation

- in other nations, great. This is where I used the “I really cannot comment...but it’s something I hope to learn more about” line!
12. *Do you have any questions for us?* You better! They want to know if you are interested and that you have put some thought into this decision. Ask about opportunities for research, initiatives to send doctors to rural areas of the province, efforts to help make the interview process less stressful, how they are dealing with fiscal cutbacks. Ask whatever you have not been able to learn before the interview. You should take the time to read about the school and their goals (in the Calendar) and, if you can, direct your questions around those goals and their mission statement. If you ask nothing, they will likely be unimpressed and think you are uninterested.
  13. *They give a situation and ask for your reaction.* This is generally some kind of ethical dilemma situation. Mine was about a young girl who wanted an abortion without her parents knowing. Last year it was about a critically ill patient who wanted to be put to death. These are questions that have no right or wrong answers (apart from the ethical aspect). Tell them your personal position on abortion or euthanasia, but also be ready to admit to the team approach and having all involved take part in the decisions. But again, don’t try to be an ethics expert!

Generally, they will also give you a few minutes at the end to add anything else. They might ask if there is anything else you wish the admissions committee to know. If for some reason you have left out one or more of your main ‘Strengths & Abilities’, then this is your saving grace. But you will probably only have a few moments, so sum it up nicely and end with something about your honest desire to study medicine.

The most important thing is to relax and be yourself. And you have to do just that. It’s not as stressful as I made it out to be, and I found that when I relaxed and did the “Strengths & Abilities” sheet, I was more confident since I had things summarized and organized. It helped me to know exactly what to say when they asked questions. But the questions about your childhood/experiences/regrets are very much spur-of-the-moment and you cannot prepare much for them.