

On the 30th of January 26 students from Key Stage 3 met to participate in a Saturday Stretch session. The session focus was Medicine and was led by two second year students from Cambridge University; Amanda Choo and Kashif Khatib. This was the students second year in delivering a session to students of Isaac Newton Academy and they presented us with some insightful information about the worlds of Medicine and university!

Amanda shared a little bit about her journey which began in Singapore:

“Prior to entering university, I grew up and studied in Singapore. From a young age I had always thought that medicine. I felt it was an exciting profession, and when I started school I found learning about the human body fascinating. I had the chance to participate in a few science competitions such as the Biomedical Olympiad or Biology Olympiad, which allowed me to learn things in greater detail outside of the school curriculum. Subsequently, I was able to follow some doctors around for work experience, and discovered that the job was not as glamorous or adrenaline-pumping as I had expected! However, I was privileged to learn from doctors about the fulfilment that they gain from their occupation, and the life lessons and skills that they have learnt over the years. This convinced me that the medical profession was not only intellectually stimulating, but also rewarding in shaping me as a person and in serving society in a unique way.”



Kashif, who was born in the UK, told us about his educational career and how he knew that Medicine was the path for him:

“Since as long as I can remember I have been fascinated with how things work, this naturally led me to favour science subjects at school. My favourite part of studying science at school was doing experiments and practicals. I always enjoyed getting stuck in and doing something new, be it synthesizing aspirin in sixth form or seeing some colours change in year 7 Science - there was always something cool to do. This naturally led me into thinking about pursuing a career in Science.

When it came to Year 12 options I chose biology, chemistry, physics, and maths. While I was looking into different careers in science medicine stood out to me. Medicine lets you apply Science in a meaningful way where you can make the lives of others better. Being a doctor is hands-on work which lets you do exciting things such as surgery. Medicine also gives you the opportunity to travel and practise anywhere in the world. It looked very appealing on paper, but was it for me? I went and found out. I volunteered at a Stroke Ward and saw how the hospital really functioned and appreciated the important role nurses and other members of the medical team played in treating patients. Work experience at a pharmacy taught me about the continuity of medical treatment in the community. Shadowing a surgeon exposed me to the unique roles and responsibilities doctors have within the healthcare system, solidifying my interests in pursuing medicine as a career.



Before my final year of school, I sat the UKCAT entrance exam for Medicine and then in October I applied to several universities for Medicine through UCAS. Since I applied to Cambridge, I also had to sit the BMAT exam. After much waiting, a few interviews and few rejections I found out that I had an offer from Cambridge to study medicine. After meeting the A-level offer, I matriculated at Magdalene College to study medicine.”

The session itself was very engaging; we began by learning about the central nervous system (CNS) and neurones which are special cells that send electrical signals through our bodies to create what we call involuntary reflexes. The students got an opportunity to play doctor and put their understanding into practise. We split into groups and students used the tendon hammer to cause a reflex by gently hitting the patellar tendon. It was very cool to watch! We watched some online videos of other reflex tests that can be performed and were intrigued to find out that this test is an important one; it is carried out by medical professionals to assess the functionality of the spinal cord.

Later in the session the students were tested on their understanding of the material covered and took part in a quiz. Things got a little competitive as teams scribbled furiously down their answers.

To conclude the session, Amanda and Kashif talked to us about life at university. They answered a lot of our questions from the competitive entry process to day to day living away from home. They talked to us about what universities are looking for in students and confirmed that in this competitive climate, academic success is not enough.

They advised that prospective students need to show a commitment to the field through volunteering and continued work experience. They also told us that universities favour students with interests and passions outside of the discipline. In essence, universities are as interested in *you* as they are your levels.



When asked the question 'do you think the session was helpful?' some students said:

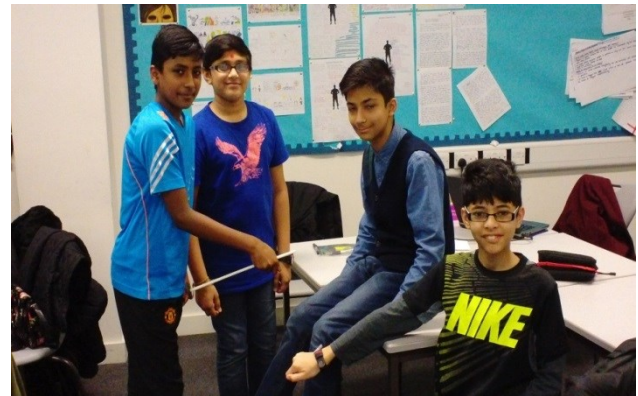
"Yes, it gave me a real taster about the life as a student studying Medicine"

"Yes, I learned all about nerves and reflexes and all about what life is like at Cambridge"

When asked if the session had prompted them to consider studying this subject at university some students said:

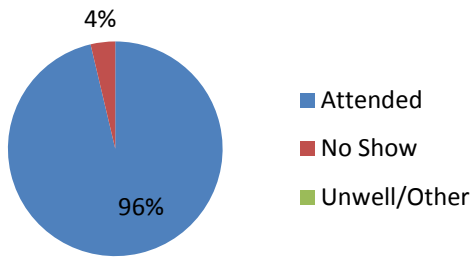
"Yes because we get to learn about the nervous system and different parts of the body. We also get to dissect bodies!"

"Yes as I am really interested in Science"

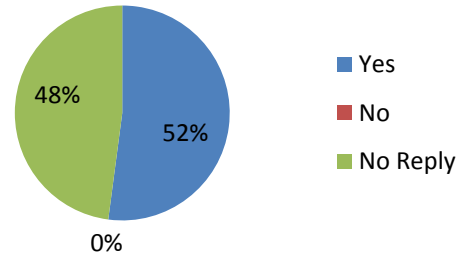


Kashif said *"The students were all well behaved and inquisitive. Some asked some intelligent questions showing that they were really thinking about what we had discussed"*

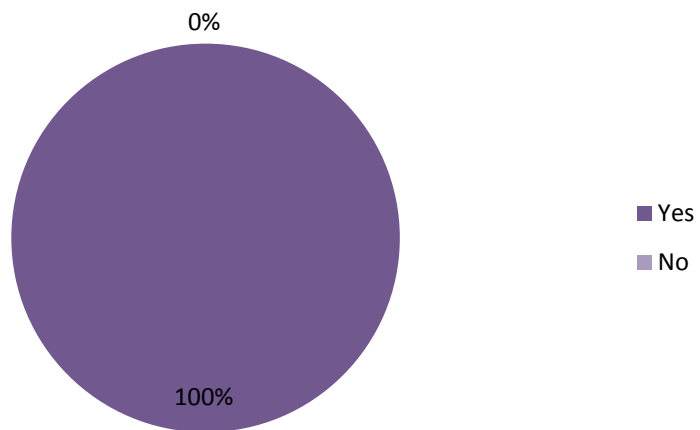
Student Attendance Data



Student Invitation Response Data



Do you think the session was helpful?



Has this session made you consider studying this subject at university?

