

In the field below, please state your reasons for wishing to pursue the combined MD/PhD degree. The available space is 3,000 characters.

As a medical researcher, I want to conduct clinically relevant research, while maintaining perspective in my work by seeing patients. I desire this career for two reasons. First, it will satisfy my personal desires to serve others, to be intellectually stimulated, and to enjoy my work. Second, I think that the job of the medical researcher is immensely important, independent of my personal qualities that draw me toward the career. Thus, to prepare myself for this career, I want to pursue the combined MD/PhD degree.

To me, it seems that knowledge is useless without an application. Conversely, knowledge must be present in order for it to be applied. This is the interdependency of the scientist and the physician. The scientist recognizes unknowns, asks questions, tests hypotheses, and generates knowledge. The physician applies this knowledge through therapeutic treatment of patients. However, there is often a gap between these two tasks; while the basic scientist may reveal the underlying mechanism of a problem, a third party must interpret this knowledge to develop successful and specific therapies. This third party is the medical scientist, who gives value to the work of the basic scientist and sustenance to the work of the physician in allowing the scientist-physician mutual dependency to exist. I see this career as critically important, which gives me motivation as I work to achieve it.

In addition to my respect for the career, the task of the MD/PhD medical scientist appeals to me for personal reasons. Several years from now, I want to feel that my work has helped others and has promoted positive change. I also want to enjoy my day-to-day business. The MD/PhD degree will give me the tools to achieve these goals.

Through my service experiences in a shelter for abused children and in the hospital, I found that I get the most satisfaction out of work that helps others. As an MD/PhD, I will achieve this satisfaction in both an immediate and a long-term way. The MD degree will allow me to heal patients, to physically sit down with another person and offer him or her relief from illness. This doctor-patient interaction will give me immediate gratification and provide context and motivation for my work in the laboratory. Complementing this work, the PhD degree will allow me to conduct research that might help a larger population than my own patients and might result in a sustained improvement in healthcare.

While there exist many careers based on service, I am drawn to the medical scientist career in particular because of its dynamic and intellectually stimulating characteristics. I seek to be challenged, to be inspired, and to be proud of my achievements. As a medical scientist, I must integrate many skills to be successful: creativity but also logic, attention to detail but also broader awareness, passion but no bias, hindsight but also foresight, personal drive but also ability to work as a team. Most importantly, I seek the excitement of integrating the two fundamentals of healthcare, the development and the application of therapy. Thus, it seems the dual MD/PhD degree will best equip me for a meaningful career of service in an intellectually stimulating field. (3,217 characters)