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MED TIMES MAGAZINE

College of Medicine, Alfaisal University



جامعة الفيصل
Alfaisal University



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Alfaisal University

We present to you:
Alfaisal Med Times Winter Issue
2019-2020

**A creation from the Med Times Committee under the Medical
Student Association, College of Medicine, Alfaisal University**

Hoping it gains your appreciation...

Prof. Khaled Al-Kattan
Dean of College of Medicine,
Alfaisal University

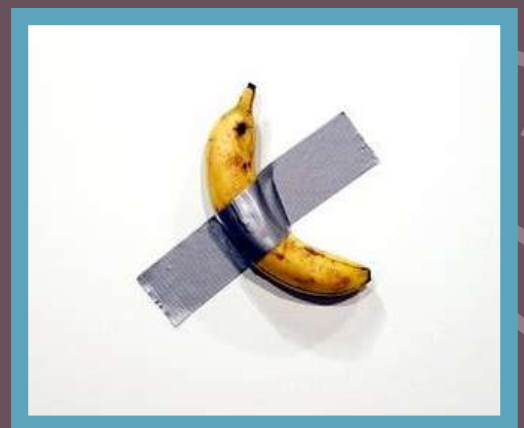
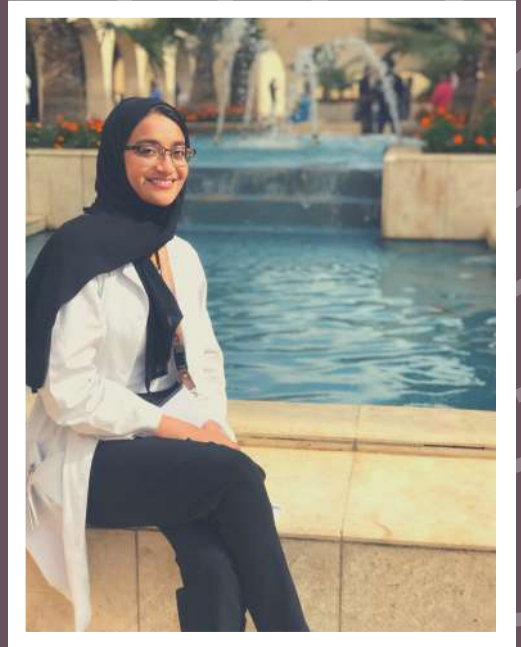
Note from the Editor...

Art is simply the universe of expression, explicit to every individual. Any expression of an emotion in any form is the projectile of art. What we do need to realise is that reading these expressions has not one programmed path. Artists who immerse themselves into understanding the depths of art often never end up in one concrete analysis.

French philosopher Jacques Derrida declares that there is no single intrinsic meaning to be found in a work, rather a multitude; defining this complexity as Deconstructive Art. According to him, the "meaning" of deconstruction is any idea that stretches beyond the boundaries of what it implies. It cannot be restricted to a meaning which, like a nutshell, compacts things and unifies them. Deconstruction is an opposition that trespasses the confines, interrupts the unity, cracks it open and in its essence, disturbs the stillness of a secure maxim. Simply put – in his words – "One might say that cracking nutshells is what deconstruction is. In a nutshell."

Deconstructive art exemplifies the mystery in the smallest of things. The work of one will resonate differently to the other. I hope this issue does justice to the topic and is of equal joy. Meanwhile, I'll leave you to carve out your own meaning of Maurizio Cattelan's international sensation *The Comedian* with which he reveals the fine line between the world of art and absolute anarchy.

Eman N. Ahmed
Editor in Chief, Med Times '19-20



Maurizio Cattelan, "Comedian"



Alfaisal Med Times

Winter Issue

"One day I will find the right words, and they will be simple."

--Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*

"Words do not express thoughts very well. They always become a little different immediately after they are expressed, a little distorted, a little foolish."

— Hermann Hesse

"Don't bend; don't water it down; don't try to make it logical; don't edit your own soul according to the fashion. Rather, follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly."

--Franz Kafka

TABLE OF CONTENTS



MED TIMES STRUCTURE.....6

MESSAGES.....7

MSA STRUCTURE.....11

MSA EVENTS.....13

A. BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

B. CULTURE DAY

C. DEAN'S LIST CEREMONY

MSA PHOTO GALLERY.....21

A. BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

B. CULTURE DAY

C. DEAN'S LIST CEREMONY

D. BOOK RECYCLING EVENT

E. LUNCH WITH PROFESSORS

F. BEYOND THE USMLE

G. EDUPATHIC

MEDTIMES GALLERY.....33

PERSONAL PIECES.....37

A. ESCAPE ON THE ROAD

B. THE EXHAUSTED MAN OF FALL

C. HIM

D. MIDNIGHT THOUGHTS

E. LOSS OF SELF

F. HAZEL BROWN CONCOCTION

INTERVIEWS.....51

A. DR. GIUSEPPE BOTTA

B. RANDA YASIN

COMIC.....59

IO ARTICLE.....61

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS.....69

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MESSAGE FROM DR. AKEF OBEIDAT

With a new year comes yet another amazing Med Times Team. Special gratitude to the hardworking members who contributed to the creation of this Winter Issue.

I hope it gains your appreciation as a reader, as well.

Dr. Akef Obeidat
Vice Dean, College of Medicine, Alfaisal University



Message from the Vice Director...

Message from the Vice Director...

Hey there,

It has been my utmost pleasure to be part of such a heartwarming family. Since I have been given the chance to write something for you guys, I wanted to mention something I always tell myself. Keep going. No matter what you will face, whether it is bad grades or it is getting way too much to handle. If your will is strong enough for this major then keep going.



Remember that if there is a will there is ALWAYS a way. Allah would never put such a strong will in somebody's heart unless they deserve it and they're good enough. We are all here sacrificing so much to carry a title of honor and trust to help others in the future. May Allah ease this road for all of us. Okay imma stop this motivational speech here. On a final note, I have to say that this year we were blessed with the most enthusiastic members that showed extreme diligence and creativity in everything they do. Med Times became one big beautiful family because of you guys and we are forever grateful!

We would like to extend our utmost gratitude and appreciation to Prof. Mohammed Alhayazaa, Prof. Khaled Alkattan, and Dr. Akef Obeidat for their continuous support and encouragement. You are the reason behind our success.

Nadine Ashraf
Vice Director of Med Times

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**ACADEMIC YEAR
2019 - 2020**





MSA EVENTS



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS EVENT

The nurse was calling my name out in an indifferent tone. I stood up and accompanied her to his clinic expecting the worst but praying for the best. She opened the door ever so slowly, and by the time it had opened, I had already felt the burden of his news. There he was, sitting behind the desk, the man who bore the news. He was busy – a mound of papers lay before him, the phone never left his ear, and his face smiled with sorrow.

He beckoned me to have a seat. I did.

That phone call felt like an eternity, but the problem was my ill preparation for the eternity to come, despite expecting the worst but praying for the best.

After he was finally done, he greeted me with a smile. I smiled back. He stared at his screen. What was once a smile was now a look I could only describe as serenity masking horror.

That was when he told me “I have some bad news for you,” and that was the last thing I recall before I realized the extent of the catastrophe. Retrospectively, the catastrophe realized ME.

This is how every breast cancer nightmare begins. From there onwards, it is a debilitating battle both psychologically and physically that lasts for a crushing period of time. It is our duty as future medical professionals to ease this battle, and this is where the MSA’s breast cancer awareness campaign comes in.

October was a month that shook the very foundations of what people assume the MSA is capable of – the hard work of the MSA Events team crystalized in a breast cancer awareness campaign that was a double-edged sword.

The event garnered an impressive attendance, the design of the “pink cube” at the heart of the event was effective in its simplicity, and the guest speakers from the reputable Zahra Association shed some much needed light on the social, familial, and medical problems breast cancer warriors face.

This experience was not merely an educational or awareness platform, it was a place where attendants had an absolutely blissful time as well. On the other hand, the next batch of Alfaisal medical students have massive shoes to fill next year if they wish to join MSA Events; the bar was raised THAT high.

“I am so proud of the students who organized this. This was done in a very professional way.” – Dr. Dana Bakheet

“It is very important to raise awareness. Alfaisal is not just a medical school – it is important for students from engineering, business, pharmacy, and science to know about the risks of breast cancer. Also, it is giving back to the community.” – Dr. Akef Obeidat

Indeed, the professionalism with which this event was executed was of the utmost excellence. So much so in fact, that his excellency Dr. Khaled Al Kattan, the dean of the college of medicine and the vice-president of the university, personally requested for the event to be extended an additional day. This would not have been possible without the most important element in organizing anything – teamwork.

Doctors to be Ahmed Khedr, Zahraa Alqassab, and Mazin El Sarrag led a dynamic team that included and incorporated a plethora of talents from Alfaisal’s college of medicine to bring forth this event.

But why? Why is this important in the first place?

“Breast cancer is an insidious disease.” – Zahraa Alqassab

Why? Because “breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. A girl born today has a cumulative one-in-eight risk of developing breast cancer during the course of her life.”

Why? Because “it is the second leading cause of death by cancer in women.”

Why? Because “around 73% of cases in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia decide to consult the doctor at a very advanced stage of disease that cannot be cured.”

“Breast cancer fighters need to know they are not alone.” – Ahmed Khedr

Indeed, they are not. Through the efforts of Zahra Association, our breast cancer fighters need not fight this battle alone. Zahra Association utilizes theme-based strategies to succeed in this regard.

Their first theme is to protect against breast cancer via spreading health and social awareness among the women in our communities and society. Their second theme is to support scientific research and cooperate with the related bodies to provide the best ways of controlling the disease.

Finally, their third theme is to contribute to bettering the services provided to breast cancer patients, prepare national cadres able to deal with the disease of breast cancer, and play a role in developing social policy to better serve breast cancer fighters. Thanks to their efforts, and the efforts of the MSA Events team, we can all scream with our breast cancer fighters:

“In this family, no one fights alone.”

A collection of traditional Indonesian cultural artifacts is displayed against a deep red background. In the center is a large, blue batik-patterned bag with intricate floral and geometric designs in red, yellow, and silver. To its left is a small, ornate brass jar with a textured surface. To the right, a decorative tassel with red and gold threads hangs from a dark, polished wooden stand. The background features a large, stylized white and blue circular motif and a framed piece of batik fabric.

Zainab Ifthikar & Muhammad Affan

CULTURAL DAY



Culture Day held on 19th of November 2019, at Alfaisal encompassed a multitude of unique cultural aspects such as colors, food, clothing and festivities that served as a testament to the diversity of students at Alfaisal University.

From Delhi to Damascus, Amman to Islamabad and Khartoum to Colombo, students from all walks of life brought a piece of their country and together orchestrated a vibrant and joyous event.

Each country set up their booth to represent the essence of their home in the best way possible. Flags were hoisted and traditional music resonated across the hallways. The President H.E Dr. Mohammed Alhayaza and Vice President for External Relations & Advancement Dr. Maha bint Mishari AlSaud along with the Dean of College of Medicine Dr. Khaled M. AlKattan graced the occasion.

Families and friends gathered to celebrate the gala occasion and food from different continents engaged the taste buds of the visitors.

Towards the end of the event each country put on performances and ended the day with a memorable note.

With their impressive corners and mesmerizing performances, the announced winners of the Cultural Day were:

1st Place: Sri Lanka

2nd Place: Palestine

3rd Place: Pakistan

College of Medicine DEAN'S LIST CEREMONY

On the tranquil balmy twilight of 2nd of December, Monday, two hundred and fifteen Alfaisal students came together under the roof of Princess Haya bint Turki Auditorium in Alfaisal University, Riyadh, accompanied by their families and close friends, to be honored for their academic success and excellence.

With people coming in and filling the corridor of the auditorium, there was a mix of delighted, gleaming people who hurried along, ushered into their designated seats in the auditorium. A hum of excitement anticipated the inauguration of the ceremony, which was hosted by Abdullah Abu Zubayda, head of treasury in MSA, and Dina Mohammed, the ex-secretary of MSA. Following a few verses of the Holy Quran, Dr. Khaled Al Kattan welcomed all to the Dean's List Ceremony for the College of Medicine. The ceremony started without further ado, with a backdrop of geode decoration and ambient music, the names of the students were called out, who received appreciation and certificate from Dr. Khaled Al Kattan, Dr. Akef Obeidat and Dr. Mohammad Alhazaya.

The awarding began sequentially from the newest batch. Second years who received recognition for their scholastic performance in their freshman year, preceded the rest of the anticipating student body from the 10th batch all the way to the 7th batch.

The event held an interval with a piano performance on-stage by Sana Aswad, who enraptured the audience with a mashup of songs by Fairouz for a quarter hour. After the performance and the closing of the ceremony, the visitors were entertained by strolling at the photo and art exhibition organized by the MedTimes Gallery, showcasing the multifaceted talents of Alfaisal students, as they exited the building.

They had queued themselves in hordes for taking photos at the professional photo booth, making precious memories of achievement, milestones and belonging within and without. On descending the stairs, the fountain displayed vivid colors through jet streams, which was reminiscent of the success of the high achievers, as they walked into the cool night. The ceremony concluded with a buffet dinner in the Male Garden in an open area, and a tented clearing, with Arabian décor and seating. Soft music started playing into the sky, creating an atmosphere for families to relax and socialize as they enjoyed the aesthetic appeal of the décor, and chatted amongst themselves in different locations.

The ceremony was completed with the joint efforts and cooperation from the MSA team, volunteers, and dean's list students, to whom we extend our heartfelt thanks. The ceremony itself was short and sweet, keeping its visitors entertained from the start to end, creating pleasant memories and substantive inspirations in all students to accomplish exceptionally during their brief term as university students and extensive journey in their professional careers.





MSA
PHOTO
GALLERY

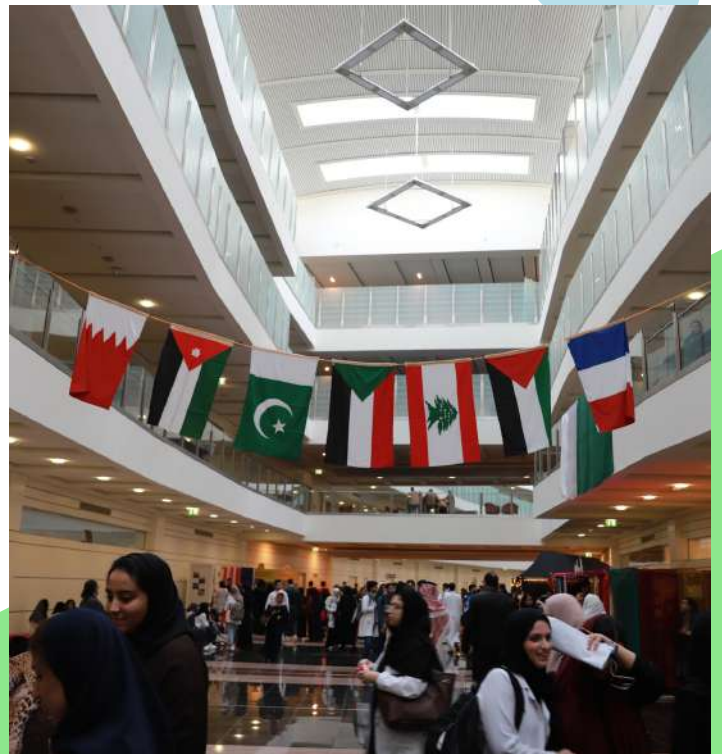
BREAST CANCER



AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



CULTURAL DAY



CULTURAL DAY



DEAN'S LIST



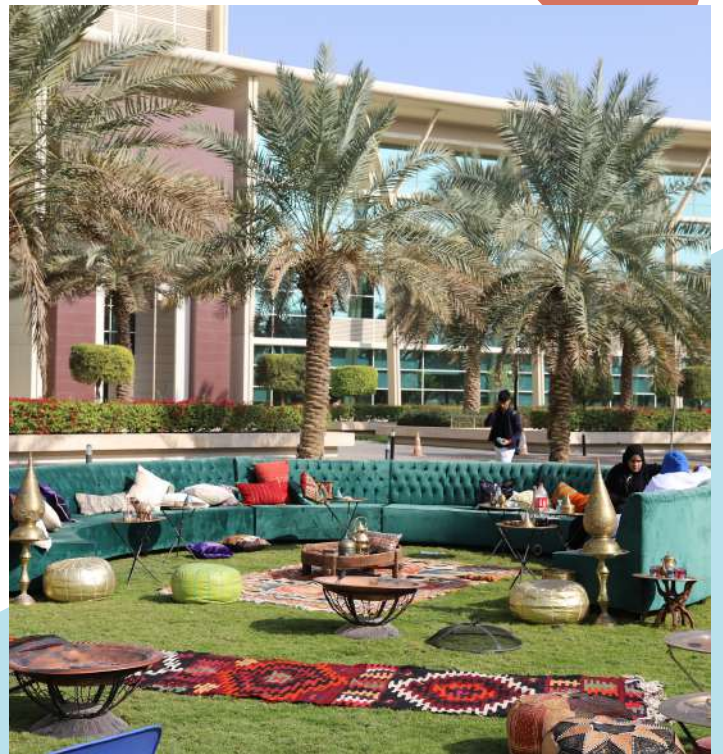
AWARDING CEREMONY



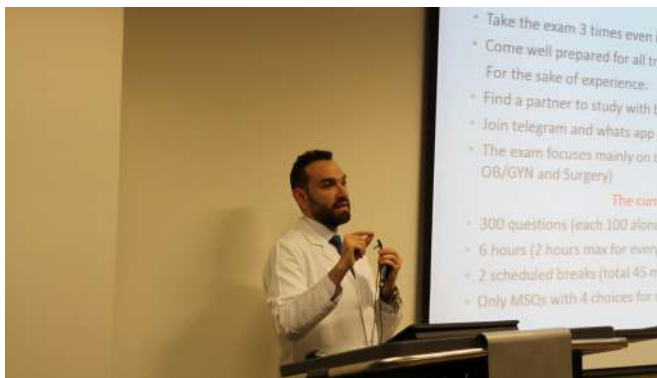
BOOK RECYCLING



LUNCH WITH PROFESSOR



BEYOND THE USMLE



EDUPATHIC



MED TIMES GALLERY





ON THE 4TH OF DECEMBER OF THE YEAR 2019, THE MED TIMES COMMITTEE ORGANIZED AND HELD A RECURRING EVENT, THE MED TIMES GALLERY. IMPRESSIVE SUBMISSION OF ART WORK AND PHOTOGRAPHY WERE DISPLAYED IN THE EVENT, WITH MANY STUDENTS ATTENDING TO ADMIRE THEIR PEERS' TALENTS. THE THEMES FOR THE GALLERY WERE "CHILDHOOD" FOR ART AND "REFLECTION" FOR PHOTOGRAPHY.

A LIVE MUSIC BOOTH WAS OPEN TO THE AUDIENCES TO ENJOY, AS WELL. SEVERAL STUDENTS EXECUTED INCREDIBLE PERFORMANCES, EITHER ON GUITAR OR PIANO. RIGHT NEXT TO THE MUSIC BOOTH, A LIVE ART BOOTH WAS SET UP FOR STUDENTS TO PAINT AND DRAW TO THEIR HEARTS' DELIGHT. IN TWO CORNERS OF THE SPACE, ATTENDEES WERE ABLE TO RELAX AND ENJOY A FUN, COMPETITIVE GAME WITH THEIR FRIENDS AFTER A DAY OF LECTURES.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEARTILY CONGRATULATE THE WINNERS OF OUR GALLERY AND THANK ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED. WE TRULY HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR TIME AT THE EVENT. HERE'S TO ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL AND IMPROVED MED TIMES GALLERY IN THE FUTURE.

WINNERS

1ST PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

"FIRE & ICE"

BY: BANA ALABRASH



1ST PLACE ART

"BABY SCRAMBLES"

BY: LARA MAJDI



2ND PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

"NATURE'S REFLECTION"

BY: WAFAA AL BORHANI



2ND PLACE ART

"LOST IN THE FOREST"

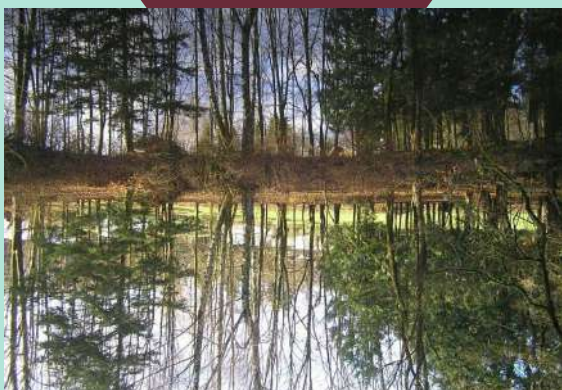
BY: KHULOOD ALHASAN



3RD PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

"FOREST REFLECTIONS"

BY: ABDULRAHMAN ATIAH



3RD PLACE ART

"SPACETOON TIME"

BY: KHAWLA BEN YAHIA





THE
RISH BOY

Naomi
Jacob

INSIDE THE
LOST PLANET

ROBERT
ANGUS

MACVICAR

RETURN TO THE
LOST PLANET

ROBERT
ANGUS
MACVICAR

THE
PAPER
PALACE

ROBERT
ANGUS
MACVICAR

OPTICS

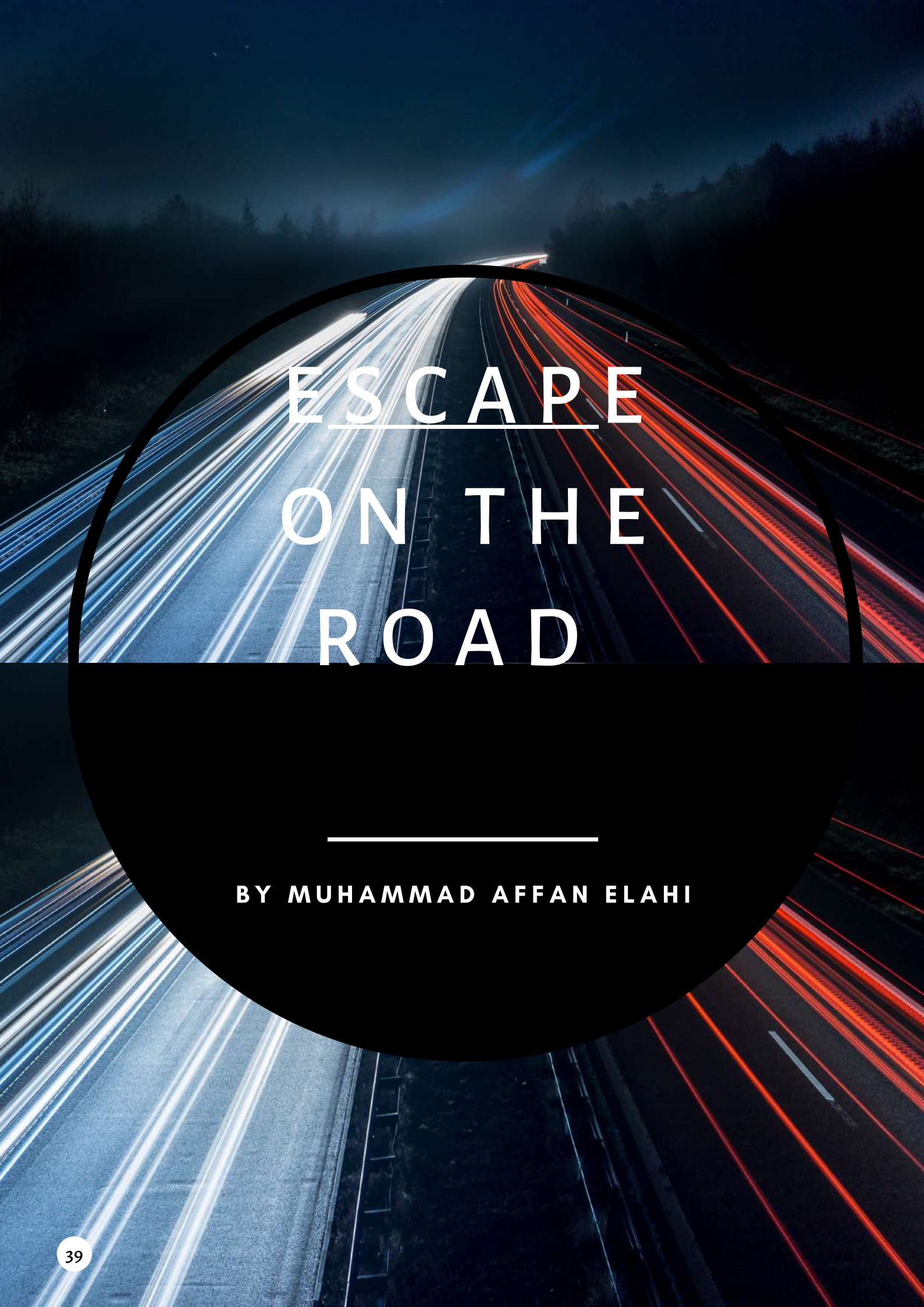
AND
SOUND

Padgham



MED TIMES ARTICLES

PERSONAL PIECES



ESCAPE ON THE ROAD

BY MUHAMMAD AFFAN ELAHI

The road may appear to many as a simple means of transportation yet it has the capacity to portray an everlasting portrait on the feeble canvas of mind.

The daily traveller travelled to its zenith albeit as slow as a huntsman weary of his chase. The morning was simply picturesque. The enchanting aroma of Sachertorte filled the air and the road was lined by hydrangeas pink and blue. The dwellers of the road were much less in number but were certainly determined to increase with every tick of the clock. Suddenly a truck at full speed interrupted the serenity of the scene. This truck was to be the harbinger of horror yet to come.

The truck came to a turn and yet persevered in its mad, deadly passion that led to it toppling. At the end of the turn, a few gardeners were busy felling a large tree with a formidable trunk. I was walking along the pavement and was quite near the ghastly truck. I was about to be crushed under this great mass. To my rescue came the trunk of this benevolent tree. The trunk managed to support the falling truck.

The already invaded tranquillity was further violated by sirens and of ambulances and people shouting. To everyone's surprise, I came out unharmed and was greeted rather cordially. To this day, I consider this as my luckiest escape on the road. If it were not for the mercy of God and the tree I would've been rather incapacitated to have even written a different version of the same story.



THE EXHAUSTED MAN OF FALL

By: Ayesha Ambia

The Wheel of Time came to rest its needle towards Septimius' domain, and he had hoped against odds to be given the shortest transit this year. He ruffled his cape of tinged red leaves, and walked into the Hall of Wisdom, wondering if there was indeed a way to convince the elders to let him work half of his quarterly aid. But Martha had already talked her way to the elders, it seems, as she frolicked out of the Hall with her billowing gown made of gardenias, cheeks blushing and pink locks flying, smelling fresh and young forever. Septimius' eyes flashed with jealousy, but he held it in. A millennium and he could never convince them, and this child who was barely out of her cradle always basked in adulations from all. He looked at his reflection in the clear crystal and saw the weary, wizened face, the sagging, dark eyes, the limp balding hair. And yet as he peeked into his soul, he found the unwavering fortitude of a thousand suns. He knew no matter what the circumstances, he would always bring his aid to completion. He would never run away from that.

Martha giggled as her cherubs told her the story of yet another young human falling victim to love. She was but a few eons-old; however, her prodigious maneuverings of elements at such a tender age made her break history by entering the "Pavilion of Time" as an aide of Spring. She had no qualms to work for a quarter annum, assorting flowers, supervising the cherubs, and making sure the springs were as sweet and fresh as they could be. With her hair braided up to her waist and embellished with queen monarch butterflies. Her speckled green eyes and freckled face was a force to reckon with, exuding the energy of rebirth and potential, and adored by all lower domains with a few exceptions.

Amid the vivacious little cherubs, a sparrow tried to make her way in with a message from the Sun King. Martha immediately ceased and went to see what it was all about.

To Aide of Spring and Matron of Flowers,

Your brother in aid requests your assistance in extracting the Crystal Consort from her reclusive abode. As you already know, she has successively avoided three interims at the Hall of Wisdom. Although I would have rather not burdened you with impossible tasks such as these, Septimius has been afflicted with rheumatism and is unable to offer his hand, and therefore, you are the only one I can entrust with this matter of consequence. Forgive my insolence for unloading this at such short notice, but only you could convince the Crystal Consort to make our aid synchronized as before. Consider the import of your crusade while you make your journey.

Godspeed.

Your brother at war,

Junae Flameage.

The blizzard and gale continued to thrash against the crystal chimes since forever, making discordant noises, yet for Decibel, it felt new every time, like a melody she wanted to commit to memory. She retreated to the dark corridor with framed paintings of her ancestors and wondered why she'd been the last one to remain. The last of her kind. She retreated to the dark corridor with framed paintings of her ancestors and wondered why she'd been the last one to remain. The last of her kind. She moved with lithe, calculated, silent movements to her study, where she kept track of all the major historical events in her dynasty; all the injustices they had wrongfully suffered; all the aiding privileges they had lost. She vowed to be the guiding flame that would bring her family name back to glory.



HIM

Feras Ataya

His is a familiar face, yet recognized by none.

His is a mellow tune, yet heard by one.

His is a sweet scent, unique, yet worn by all.

His is a feast like none other, yet all shall fall.

His embrace warm, yet none beckon hither.

They fear him, yet welcome him bitter.

He calls out like a distant dream.

But none heed the call, as it may seem.

He is the master, and we his pawns.

Indeed he is harsh, yet to him we are drawn.

His is a song of victory.

His is a song of defeat.

Rejoice, commandant!

Your men know him all too well.

How many by him have fallen?

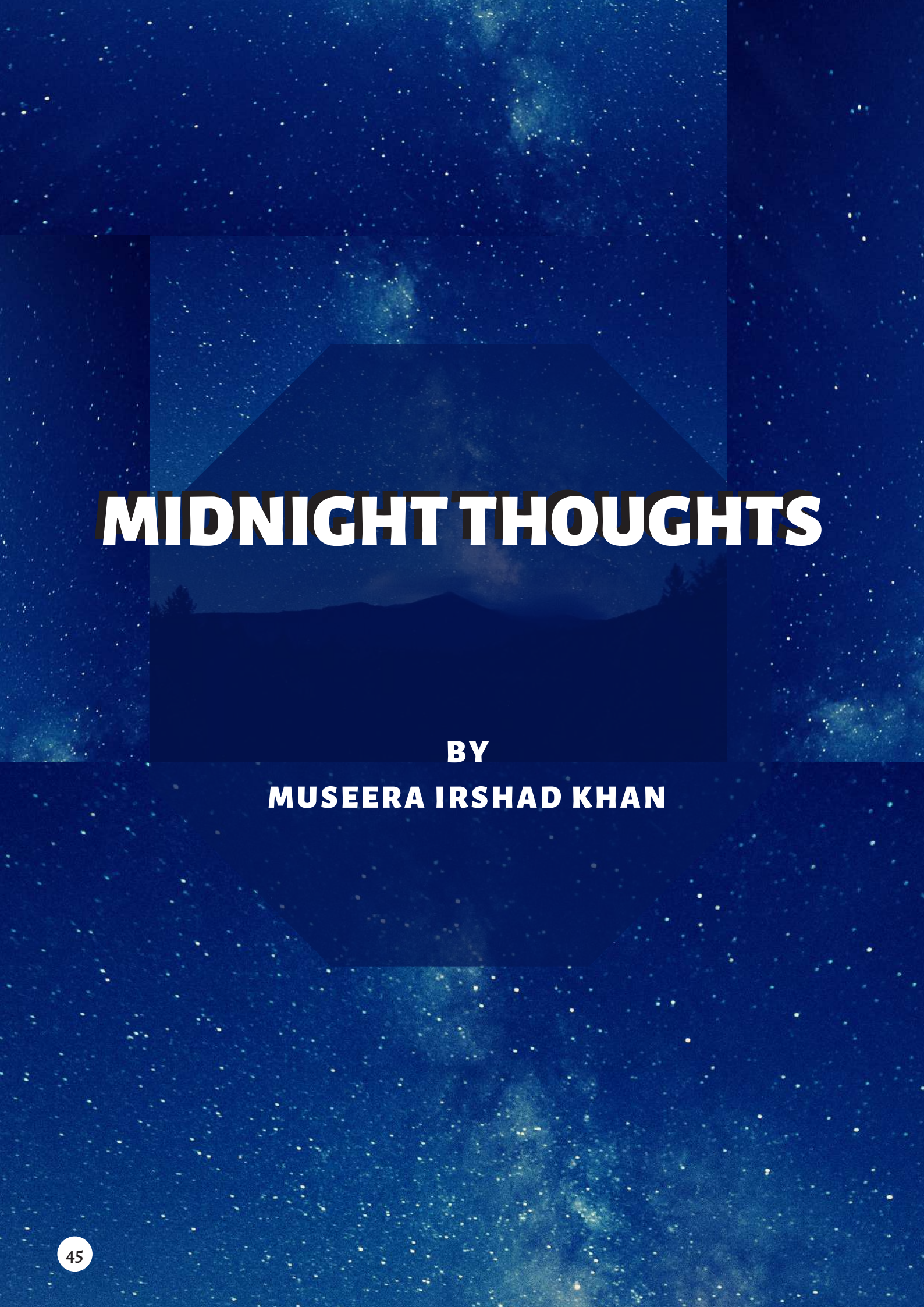
By God, how cowardly you have gotten.

He speaks all tongues, yet you fall deaf.

You cannot deny him what is his, lest you forget.

What do we tell him 'ere break of day?

Just a bit more, what do you say?



MIDNIGHT THOUGHTS

BY

MUSEERA IRSHAD KHAN

In my country, we have ceiling fans. Devices which provide air to a room and convenient distraction to students. My house has none but sometimes, I can imagine one when I look up, desperate to be distracted from my thoughts.

When fourth year started, for some reason, I did not expect to be run over by feelings of self-doubt. I did not imagine that I would feel so out of place and wince whenever I got a question wrong. It felt like I might do more harm than good to patients, so I had an insane urge to start all over again because I was not ready.

Moments like these are when I imagine a ceiling fan over my head and pretend it is fanning positivity towards me, to remind me of all the amazing staff who helped me and gave me strength this semester. The breeze of my imaginary fan brings memories of many who have helped me stand up when I stumbled. Lucia, who had scolded me in her motherly way, for standing like a spectator in the delivery room. She reminded me that compassion is also part of the job description. Fo, who patiently answered all my questions without judgment and encouraged me to practice on patients. Samantha, who untangled my worries and told me to hold my chin high, in-between lessons of how to scare suspicious drivers. Silvi, who blinded me with her smile and taught me how to be optimistic and have fun in any setback life throws at me.

If only I had unlimited words to say, I would have written praises upon praises of every single person who lifted the dark cloud over my head and helped me remember my purpose. These people have shown me the true meaning of a multi-disciplinary team. Nothing reassures me more than knowing that I will have a team watching my back and guiding me when I become a doctor.

LOSSSSSS

O F S E L F

BY MARYAM ALTAYEB

Standing in a room full of faces,
you feel nothing but empty.
You hear the voices echoing,
nothing escapes past your thoughts;
wandering numbness.

The sounds get louder;
the ringing in your ears.
When they ask, you reply
“I’m just tired.”

Dreaming
are you dreaming?
You feel your grip loosen,
a feeling of momentary weakness
a path of rubble beneath your feet.
Shards of glass pierce through your skin
with every step you take;
unavoidable pain lingers,
and with every movement, you wish you could
go back
to evade this feeling
of helplessness.

Wake up

Wake up

Wake up

Temporary relief
from this feeling,
from yourself,
from the idea that burdens you.

The phone rings accusatorially;
the voices stage an interrogation
emphasizing on your negligence.

You want to scream,
but your head feels as though it is underwater
in a sea of self-aggravation.

Your mind dissociates
from reality;
wandering numbness.

Strolling through a sea of fire
aimlessly
looking for a beacon of light,
and comfort,
and sanity.

You wonder if the world
would look at you differently
if your thoughts
were on a grand display
like the visions that turn your dreams into nightmares.

Kindness is the only thing
that feels remotely like warmth;
you wish there was more of it
in the world —
kindness and empathy
maybe then this feeling would subside.



Hazel Brown Concoction

ZAINAB IFTHIKAR



Your eyes speak volume. Volumes of grace and unfathomable beauty. I have lost myself in the depths of that hazel brown concoction, bleeding into a rich gold tint. The jet-black stripes that carve craters in the vibrant brown; Leonardo's gentle paint brush strokes that brought life to your frown.

That magical gaze seems to persistently follow me, whilst diffusing a contagious exuberance. Your eyes have teleported me to the summits of the tallest mountains, made me dive into a cold cerulean blue ocean, and run wild through endless fields of lavender blue flowers.

They remind me of lustrous pearls in a chalky white oyster shell, encased by faint fluttery lashes that would sweep each other softly with every gentle blink. When an icy cold night falls, one glance at the brilliant star-studded sky brings back your memory; indeed, the Mona Lisa was destined to bewilder minds in every century.

Your eyes reflect the fierceness of a lion raging with grizzly anger. They reflect compassion, looking like velvety tufts of clouds sailing past in solitude. They reflect the sharpness of an eagle eagerly fixated on its prey.

You might have been real, you might have been a fantasy, but yet your eyes remain to voice your legacy. Your eyes speak volumes, volumes that rekindle the literary spirit hibernating within me.

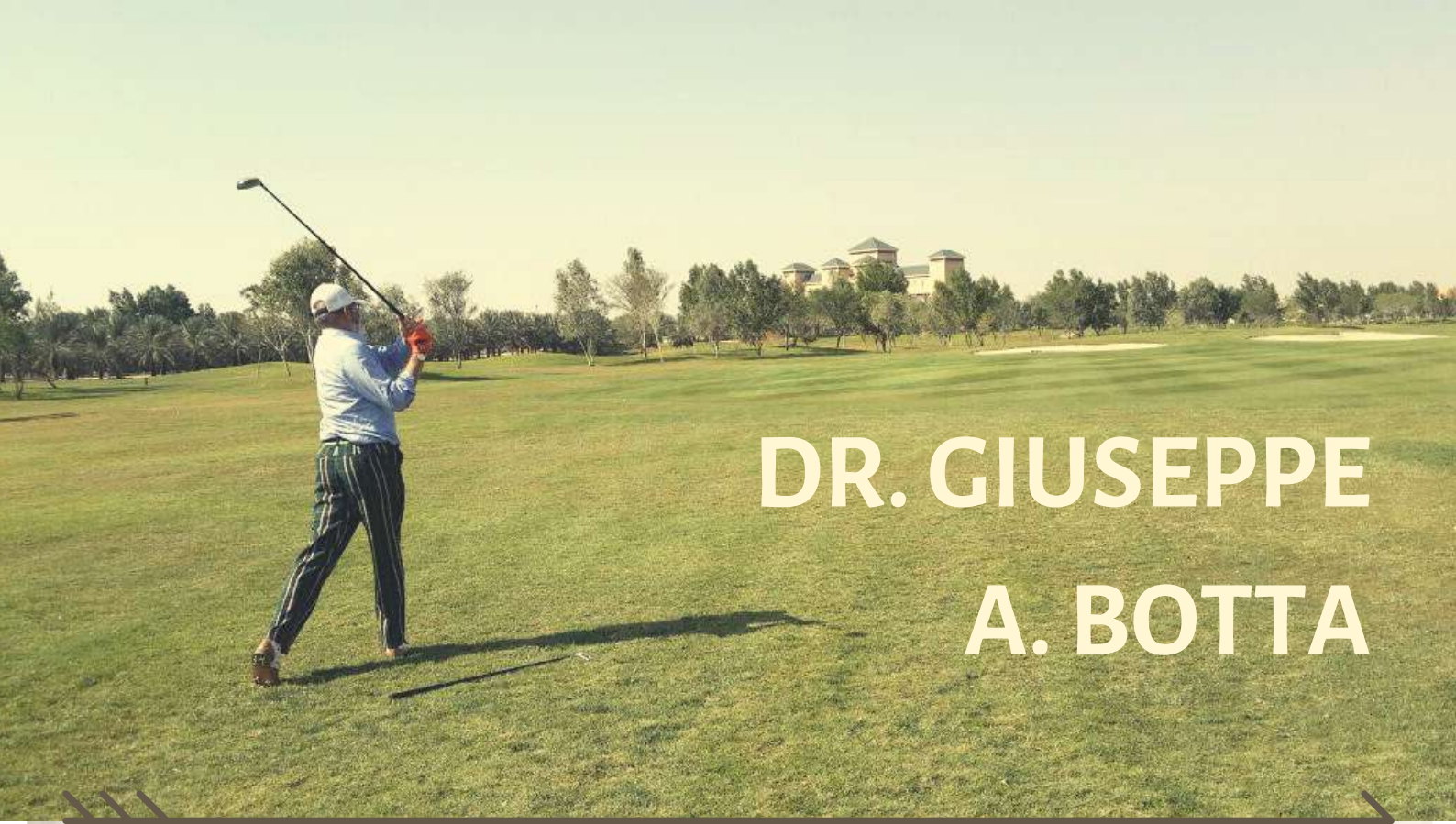




INTERVIEWS

Dr. Giuseppe A Botta

Randa Yasin



DR. GIUSEPPE A. BOTTA

I still remember that cheery and ecstatic voice calling me into his office. There I found myself a man, with an equally large smile and a remarkable bow tie that perfectly complemented his attire. This was none other than Dr. Giuseppe A. Botta, with whom I was about to have a conversation, that was going to change my life forever.

A man in his 70s, he still recalls how he came to be who he's now. His deep-rooted passion for helping people kept him going since he was a kid. As destiny curved a path for him, he became a General Practitioner right after graduation. Days went by, patients came in and out, always thanking their beloved doctor from the bottom of their hearts. But, there was something that still kept bothering him. How could he generously return their thanks, when he didn't know how their sickness happened in the first place? Unsatisfied by his lack of knowledge, he finally decided to challenge himself. With a leap of faith he joined as an MD at Brown University.

Finally, something fascinated him, Research. He would sit in the lab all day and night and writing experimental reports, but who cared? It didn't mind him a bit, because he finally got to know how these infectious diseases happened, their treatment, even resistance !

He would go on to write papers on Microbiology and Infectious diseases, especially Penicillin, the miracle medicine of his era, and Aerobic Pathogenesis. Also, to showcase his research work, he travelled all around the world, to places like Amsterdam, Krakow, London, Lyon, Freiburg, and Dakar. There, he was particularly fond of the native people, and he got to know them by reading, by conversing in their native tongue; he did this to understand their feelings, culture, and attitude toward everyday life.



It didn't stop there yet. In his last years, He chose to teach, to raise more aspiring young doctors as amazingly competent as himself, whom the society badly needed. It was here that he discovered the art of teaching, from his own students! After years of careful teaching, deep attention for his students, his beloved students sent him slides and even new articles from their lessons in return.

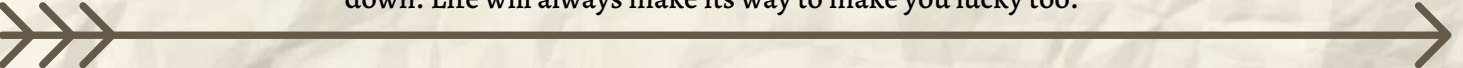
Every single student gave him something new, and he saw a ray of hope, especially in Year 2 students. He called them the Naïves; they could write whole books about exciting new theories, new discoveries, majority of them unfounded without any ground, that's how strong their creativity is! But as they grow up, they tend to compromise creativity for knowledge and practicality by reading too many books. That's why he always says " Keep your mind open, and don't let knowledge suffocate your ingenuity."

His formula to careful teaching is not to overload students with irrelevant knowledge. Especially in the millennial era, where the treatment for the rarest diseases can be found on Google. To achieve that, he always considers the chance of that information become obsolete soon, and to tackle that problem, he decides whether to give relevant information or to give a tool to appreciate what is relevant from what is not. He has always been for group discussions and PBLs, which he strongly stimulates critical thinking, fosters creativity, and allows them to see real life issues from different perspectives.

I bet you might be wondering whether all he does is work! I can guarantee you he's as normal as any of you reading this. At our age, he already scaled the Italian Alps, his former hobby back then. Surprisingly he's a good actor too, even having achieved a certificate from Harvard for an Acting course, which he considered his second choice of job if he failed to become a doctor. Being an avid bookworm, he's in love with William Faulkner, his genius role model, including Dante Alighieri, and Shakespeare too. He goes jogging from time to time, and not to mention, his newfound favorite, Golf. He regularly gets to enjoy the greenery from his golf and has a great time with his friends on a Saturday afternoon. He quotes from Lord Mountbatten's conversation with the Emperor of China, saying "we are too busy men governing millions of people but still we have room for couple a cup of tea!", meaning there's always time for some fun, if you only will.

All of this, he couldn't have achieved it by himself, as he credits his beloved professor and his father, whose pictures still hang in his office. Both gave him the freedom he wanted and trusted him, deeming him a responsible man, both at home and at the lab. He can't forget his beloved friends too, whom he met in his travels all around the world. Even though he's lost touch with them, he has them in his heart, all of whom supported him through the rough terrain of life. "That's what matters in Friendship", he says.

All in all, Luck was vital for his life. Getting to go to different countries and meeting different people, getting to enjoy life and excelling at work too, and getting to study in big institutions and have great friends to support him, all of it he credits to luck. And for some wise life advice, he tells us to work hard, but not to forget that there's more to life than that. Keep your friendships and family ties very strong. Find time for your family and for your friends. Moreover, to respect other peoples' opinions, and see them with an open mind. And finally, treat others kindly, and don't let the turkey get you down. Life will always make its way to make you lucky too.



One-fourth of a Quadruplet



RANDA YASIN
CO-DIRECTOR OF IO

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

My name is Randa Yasin, a 4th year medical student, currently doing my clerkship at Alfaisal University. "1/4" is always part of my story, I am one of a quadruplet, or if easier, a twin to a triplet. For those who know me, not only do they know I'm a 1/4, but they also know how much I love drawing and writing. My writings basically revolve about life, lessons, experiences, random thoughts I collect from the "backstage of life", I call it. Drawing is a skill I got from my mom, I still have the pieces that were simple imitations of her beautiful work. I remember her reactions to my drawings back in the days, she would make me feel like I can draw anything, and this was how she supported me to develop this skill. I also love reading poetry and books about bright figures and great people with variety of experiences. I enjoy peace and tranquility, I prefer quiet areas, only rarely would throw myself in noisy crowded places. One thing most people guess right about me is I'm direct, I cherish standards, and I choose humanity over anything else.

AS OF THIS YEAR, YOU ARE THE CO-DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE, AND YOU HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED WITH CTP. TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT. (HOW DID YOU START? WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS YEAR? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN THE AFOREMENTIONED COMMITTEE?)

I am the first person who chose to study medicine in my family. With all the support my parents provided as I made my decision, I still had some missing details regarding the opportunities available for a medical student, I didn't know what to do at each stage of my life, my plan was only limited to the corresponding year, which I wasn't used to, our dad have always taught us, if we don't have a plan for at least the next 2 years, there's something wrong. On my second year, I decided to join CTP (Clinical Training Program) which primarily aimed to secure seats for students in different hospitals locally and globally for clinical electives. I felt like I can learn by helping students, this would help me discover what is available and what is the right time for each step. And I wasn't wrong, CTP helped me learn a lot, it opened my eyes to all available opportunities for medical students, it helped me decide what I wanted to do at what time, it has indeed helped me to develop my plan for post-graduation!

CTP was an amazing committee with great achievements, it helped its members and benefited a lot of medical students and interns who are now residents and doctors. Similarly, URC (Undergraduate Research Committee) facilitated students to get in research projects in different institutions globally. With the great progress brought by each committee, both were merged to create IO (International Office), one name for a greater vision and a bigger goal. IO will continue to provide exceptional opportunities for Alfaisal medical students and explore more ways and expand the scopes for helping medical students.

WE RECENTLY SAW AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED ABOUT YOUR SIBLINGS (3/4 OF A QUADRUPLT), WHO STUDY ABROAD IN AMERICA. HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING SEPARATED AFTER 18 YEARS OF BEING INSEPARABLE?

This question has so many answers and feelings that probably none of what I would want to say may come out. It wasn't an easy decision, we have literally been together for the entirety of our 18 years, and of course 9 months before. We learned how to walk and run together, how to defend each other, how to stay together, taught and learned from each other, we grew up together. I remember the day I decided to apply for CoM at Alfaisal University, they were also almost decided about where they will be going, only then I felt hesitant about my decision. I felt it was becoming real, all the preparations and planning a couple of years ago were the "steps" to the new "destination" that I thought was still far. The summer passed by, and it was their time to travel, it was difficult, that's all I can say. It's something new, we've always been together, having to be around 12000 km away all of a sudden wasn't easy. Yet, one thing I always told myself and still say is, that wanting life to continue the way I want only because I am used to it, is very selfish, imposing things to fit my comfort zone is very selfish, and that all I have to do is support them like they promised they will support me. Knowing that every day they are a step closer to their dreams and to greater achievements was the best thing I could think of. The answer to how I feel about being separated after 18 years of being inseparable, is proud and appreciative, full of honor and happiness, this triplet makes me smile for every change and progress they achieve, all the feelings aside, I am a proud bigger twin to a triplet!

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE MEDICINE? WHY DID YOU DEVIATE AWAY FROM BUSINESS WHEN MOST OF YOUR FAMILY WENT IN THAT DIRECTION?

Talking about myself involves talking about the entire team of the 4. I recall the big white board my dad had in his office with all possible choices of countries, states and cities for universities, I remember the long criteria he set to rank all the universities he listed. He would gather us for a meeting, and we would all start discussing our options and preferences. The triplets chose different business majors, all after thorough research with my parents, and I chose Medicine. My siblings inherited the love for the world of business from our father, and I acquired the love for Medicine by myself. I had chosen medicine since grade 8, I was very sure and certain. I have always loved to do what I am doing now; I have so much dreamt of it that at some moments I thought I won't be able to do it, but with all the support I have, I am grateful that today, is the tomorrow I worried about yesterday and I am grateful for what's yet to come. Since grade 8, I never questioned my decision until the 4 of us had separate university applications, and yet, I still chose medicine.

AFTER NEARLY 4 YEARS IN MEDICINE, WOULD YOU CHANGE MAJORS IF YOU GOT THE CHANCE TO START OVER?

After 4 years in medicine, I would still choose medicine every time. I work on loving what I do along with doing what I do. With this, I will have the same answer for every time I get this question.

FAVORITE/MOST MEMORABLE EVENT FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD?

Memories are a lot, they're the memories of 4. We have memories that we still recall, and ones we heard as stories from pictures and videos. Side note, we have a lot of videos recorded of us, started since day 1, that's one way our parents taught us how to plan ahead, 21 years and counting! Pretty much the best thing we get to watch now when we're all bored, we call it a movie night too.

We recall a different memory and event almost every day, but one that we all enjoy recalling is how we used to create games to stay and play together.

Our favorite was when it was snack time, yes we had a specific time for snacks during the day so that our parents ensure we do eat well during lunch and dinner. I think we were around 6 or 7 years old, so our story would start when we get our snacks, I always chose to be the mother, so that I keep the snacks with me, and also its worth mentioning because I was the oldest of the four too. The triplet would be my children or students, every time we would create a story, sometimes about school, other times we are in the mall, or at the home enriching them what I used to call wisdom, and depending on the story, I would reward them with their snacks. This is a cute memory I chose to mention, hiding off the action we used to create, which I can say is more memorable, but will keep this ending open.

GIVE US 3 WORDS YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOU.

Well, I have much more than 3, but most are ambitious, articulate, and emotionally intelligent. I feel it would be unfair that I don't mention crazy and stubborn too. Had to add as part of being articulate.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE YOUR BIGGEST STRENGTHS? WEAKNESSES?

One tends to have different reactions to different situations and on each day would discover something new and aim to acquire better skills and more strengths, but by far, I can say I can stand very tough and solid when I need to support a beloved person, emotions aside. I am patient, to an extent. I tend to choose thinking over feeling, brains over heart. I am honest, and I tend to put my standards and thoughts on top and above of everything regardless to the crowd. Weaknesses, unlike strengths, are things one discovers to resolve and turn into strengths, so those I will keep for myself.

WHERE DO YOU ENVISION YOURSELF 10 YEARS FROM NOW?

I will have to write a story for this if I start. But long story short, somewhere I'm preparing for now and praying god for. Will leave it for life to answer.

WHAT SPECIALTY DO YOU PLAN TO PURSUE?

I'm sure we all chose at least 3 different specialties, if not more, during our pathway before we became certain about our final decision. I want to become a cardiologist, this has always been what I wanted for too long, and I made sure I expose myself to all possible specialties before making my final decision. After every experience, I would again choose cardiology.

IF YOU HAD TO BE SHIPWRECKED ON A DESERTED ISLAND, BUT ALL YOUR HUMAN NEEDS—SUCH AS FOOD AND WATER—WERE TAKEN CARE OF, WHAT TWO ITEMS WOULD YOU WANT TO HAVE WITH YOU?

A box of matches and a knife.

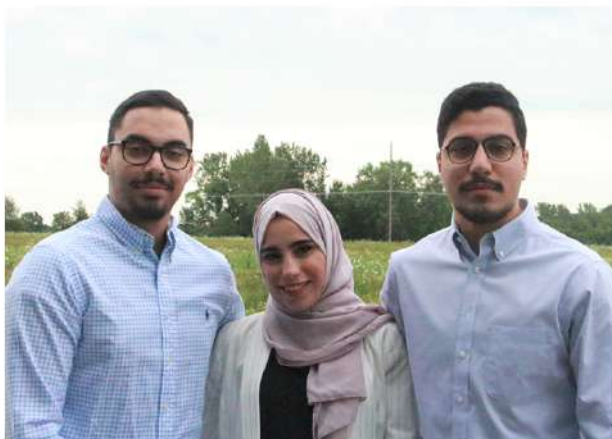
BESTOW US WITH A LITTLE BIT OF THE WISDOM YOU'RE KNOWN FOR, PLEASE.

When there's much I can say, I will choose a big theme that can reflect on many of what I would want to say – your standards and principles are strong enough to keep you going if you choose to keep them, they can get you to where you want, and get you what you want - confidence, success, happiness, peace, respect and strength. But if you choose to delete them for doing what your surrounding demanded, and what you only thought you wanted, not only you will be losing them, you will be losing yourself, you will be actually giving up on your rights. Don't lose them, standards and principles.

The inspiration behind this interview...

A sibling journey: Three-fourths of quadruplets find success at UNIBusiness

 3 months ago  UNIBusiness Editor



Scan to Read!

Mental Health Awareness

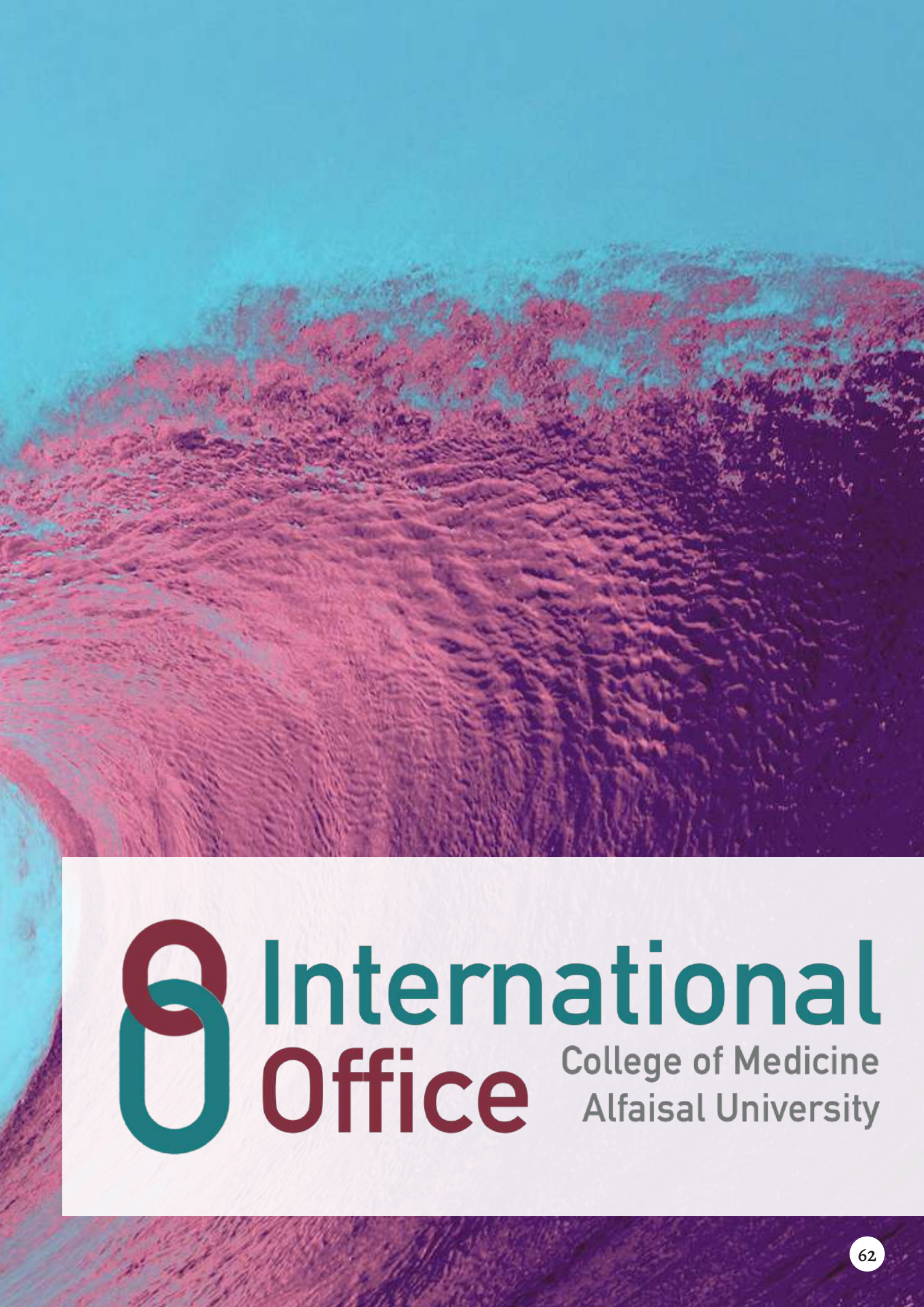
Artist: Abdullah Tajeddin



"Schizophrenia"

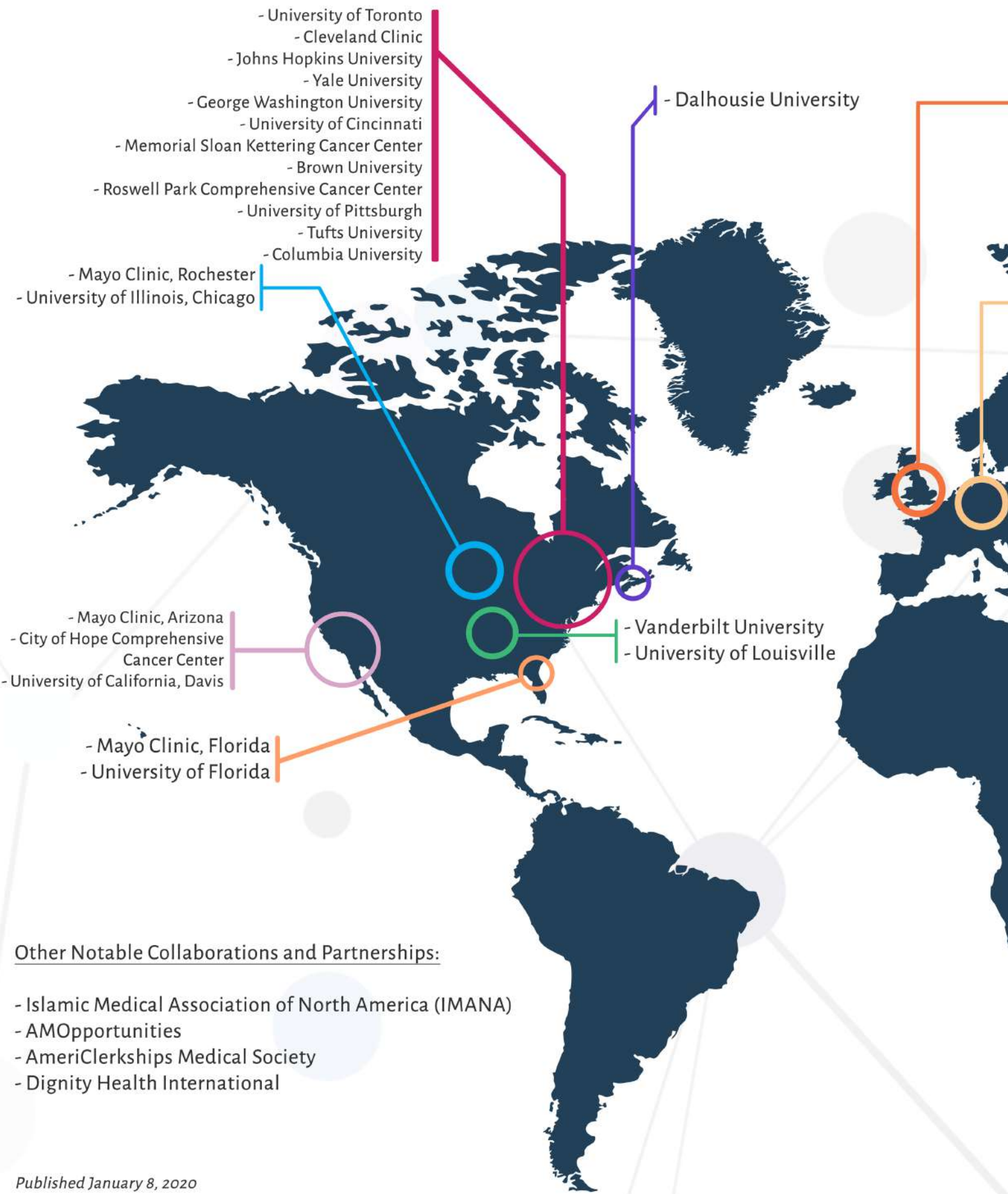
Tajeddis





International Office

College of Medicine
Alfaisal University



- University of Bristol
- Barts' Cancer Institute
- University of Birmingham
- University of Sheffield
- University of Strathclyde
- Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital
- Harefield Hospital

- University Medical
Center Hamburg-
Eppendorf

- International Islamic University
Malaysia

- King Faisal Specialist Hospital &
Research Center
- AlDara Hospital and Medical Center
- Specialized Medical Center

- Istanbul University

- Monash Health

Our Global Collaborations

Key terms:

USMLE- United States Medical Licensing Exam

IMG – International Medical Graduate

"The Match" or NRMP – National Resident Matching Program

ECFMG - Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates

ERAS - Electronic Residency Application Service

LOR – Letter Of Recommendation

USCE – United States Clinical Experience

DR. OMAR JAVED

ADVISOR, IO

DIRECTOR, IO ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE (ARO)

ROAD TO US RESIDENCY (OR "US MEDICAL RESIDENCY – FOR DUMMIES")

At Alfaisal, we are witnessing a monumental rise of interest in pursuing US medical residency among medical students, with interns ruthlessly hunting for and applying to clinical electives left and right, 5th and 4th years shattering the status quo by giving the Step 1 exam mid-clerkship, 3rd-year students are seen ordering shawarma at Ya Mal Alsham while tightly holding on to their FIRST AID books, instilling fear in the hearts of the 2nd and 1st years who are still reminiscing about the good ol' high school days. Folks, this article will give you a comprehensive overview of the US Residency pathway, while highlighting the most important details that will assist you in planning your US Match journey. A significant proportion of the advice mentioned here descended to me from our seniors who successfully matched. Residency is a stage of medical training that medical school graduates undergo to specialize in their field of interest (e.g., Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, General Surgery). In the US, duration varies from specialty to specialty, being 3 years for family medicine and up to 7 years for neurosurgery. After completing residency, physicians can pursue "fellowships" to further sub-specialize (e.g., Cardiology, Pediatric Endocrinology, Minimally Invasive and Bariatric Surgery).

"Competition" - Ah yes, the bread and butter of medicine. The medical career is indeed competitive, and residency is no different. What makes one specialty more competitive than another? Demand drives the number of training spots, which drives the set requirements, which eventually dictates how many people apply and how many applicants are ultimately chosen. In 2019, there were 232 neurosurgery positions vs 8,116 internal medicine residency positions. Why? Because that's just how many neurosurgery residents and medicine residents the country's healthcare system needs! Similarly, some specialties, programs, and states are considered more "IMG-friendly" than others, based on past acceptance trends.

Last year (2019), 44,603 applicants competed for 35,185 available residency spots. What factors influence acceptance into residency? Nerds: this is where you stop reading. A 260+ in your Step 1 alone won't get you a residency position, that too in a competitive specialty. Acceptance is influenced by a constellation of factors that residency programs look into, from your Step scores to US clinical experience, letters of recommendation, research experience, and extracurricular and volunteering experience. Some of the factors taken into consideration, mentioned by the highest proportion of Program Directors when surveyed by the NRMP (National Residency Matching Program), along with importance rating were – Step 1 score (98%, 4.1), letters of recommendation (86%, 4.2), Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE, aka Dean's Letter) (81%, 4.0), Step 2 CK scores (80%, 4.0) and personal statement (78%, 3.8). More details can be found online through the NRMP Residency Match Data and Reports.

PLANNING MEDICAL SCHOOL – FROM A RESIDENCY PERSPECTIVE

In this section, I'll share a standard timeline that is considered "preferred" by seniors who have pursued this pathway and succeeded. Remember, your timeline may be significantly different and that's okay, as long as you're on track.

The first three years of medical school should really be about improving yourself as an individual, on a personal and professional level. Get involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities, work in teams with different people, identify your strengths and weaknesses, and polish your interpersonal skills. However, at some point, you will need to ask yourself, "Does this activity benefit me in any way with regards to my future career plans?". From there on, you'll need to re-focus your involvements to be more medically/scientifically relevant to you and perhaps your future specialty of interest. Activities like community service, volunteering in underserved areas and participating in medical relief to rural communities look really good on your CV. MSA is an incredible outlet of opportunities; engaging in the right things and highlighting them smartly in your CV can significantly strengthen your application.

Who doesn't love a physician practicing evidence-based medicine? Research experience, particularly in your desired specialty can add a great flavor to your application and reassure programs about your interest in the specialty. This is especially true for the most competitive specialties (e.g., Plastic Surgery, Orthopedics, Neurosurgery), where the mean number of publications by accepted candidates reaches over 20-30! Publications are indeed the best outcome of any research project, but abstracts and conference presentations also count towards "research experience". Research in the US is particularly valuable, as, in addition to the research experience, it also allows you to build personal connections that could go a long way in your professional journey. The MSA International Office offers great opportunities to nurture your interest in research and also provides assistance to help you reach that best outcome – publications. (check them out on Twitter @iocom_au)

Academically, the first three years must be utilized to build and strengthen your knowledge base. Invest time and energy in understanding concepts. The importance of doing this was felt by most of us when we started studying for Step 1 in the 5th year/internship. We had to re-learn topics that we never spent time understanding properly and only studied them for university exams. Therefore, besides the extracurriculars, make sure you spend time solidifying your core concepts and pay particular attention to Physiology, Pharmacology, and Pathology, without necessarily going into "dedicated" Step 1 studying.

enter 4th year - the clerkships. Ah, a breath of fresh air. No more regular university exams. No more stuck in a four-walled classroom. One step closer to the "real thing". One step closer to graduation. That also means you should probably do something about your USMLEs. And that's what happens here. This is where you begin going all in. Set a goal high enough to meet your needs (e.g., the golden number "240+" is considered the safe minimum that keeps most doors open for specialties like Internal Medicine) and practical enough to be achievable. Start minimizing holidays and breaks, start studying for STEP 1 daily. A helpful tip is to align your Step 1 studying with your current clerkship. So, if you're doing Internal Medicine clerkship, aim to cover Step 1 Cardiovascular, Endocrine, Pulmonary, Renal, and so on. Clerkships are generally 8 weeks long – aim to study for Step 1 in the first 6 weeks, and then switch to studying for your clerkship exam in the last 2 weeks.

To sum it all up, your USMLE milestones should look like this:

Start of 4th year – Begin studying for Step 1 seriously

By the end of 5th year – Give Step 1

Internship – Do Step 2 CK and CS

Allow me to quickly give you an overview of the USMLE exams. Step 1 is an MCQ-format exam (7 blocks of 40 questions each) that tests the basic sciences we take during our first 3 years of medical school (albeit often in a clinical context). Step 2 CK (Clinical Knowledge) is also an MCQ-format exam (8 blocks of 40 questions each) that tests clinical knowledge that we are usually exposed to during our clerkship years. Step 2 CS is an OSCE-styled exam consisting of 12 patient encounters (history, physical, counseling, notes typing) and can only be taken in one of the 5 centers in the US. This makes scheduling the exam early very important (~ 6 months before the exam date), as there's a global competition for available seats. Step 3 is a 2-day exam consisting of MCQs and Clinical Case Simulations (CCS) and is the final step towards full licensure. Most programs require residents to take it before beginning Year 2 of residency.

US CLINICAL EXPERIENCE (USCE)

USCE is a critical part of your residency application and can improve your application in so many ways. Most programs have a minimum requirement for USCE (for eg., a minimum of 3 months, a minimum of 6 months, etc.). Besides helping you familiarize yourself with the US healthcare system, arguably the most important aspect of US clinical rotations is getting **letters of recommendation (LOR)** that you're required to submit with your application. Connections that you build with attendings, program directors, and other medical trainees through your clinical rotations can go a long way in your residency journey. Simply put, they can get you interviews.

Hands-on "clinical electives/sub-internships/externships/clerkships" are much more beneficial and valuable. However, non-hands-on "observerships/shadowing" can serve as a nice extra and can help you make connections and get LORs but will never replace hands-on rotations in terms of value. Plan your electives early and check the requirements, since some of them may take time to complete (e.g., vaccinations).

Then there are Step 1-requiring electives and those electives that don't require Step 1. As a rule of thumb, the former is usually relatively cheaper. Just one of the many benefits of getting done with Step 1 early. Again, the MSA International Office has been working to get some of the best opportunities for clinical experience in the states, by securing connections with established hospitals/clinics/organizations. One of the recent additions to the list was a partnership with **AMOpportunities**, an establishment partnering with different medical schools and institutions in the US to provide clinical experience.

THE RESIDENCY APPLICATION

ERAS is the centralized online application service you'll use to deliver your application, along with supporting documents, to residency programs. It allows you to apply to a large number of programs. Additionally, you're not restricted to one specialty and can apply to multiple specialties. Things to look at when choosing which programs to apply to are: IMG%, curriculum, visa sponsorship, application criteria (do you meet it?), fellowship placements (inhouse or elsewhere?), activities, city, and state. 15th September is generally considered the safe general "deadline" before which you should ideally complete your application, as this is when residency programs start receiving applications.

Then the wait for interview invitations begins. With every email, your heart rate rises to supraventricular tachycardic levels. Most people consider getting interviews as the biggest step towards victory (aka matching). Most programs have a pre-interview dinner, followed the next day by a hospital tour and interviews. Generally, the interviews aim to assess what kind of person you are, both personally and professionally. Interviews usually happen until January, after which you rank the programs you interviewed at as per your preference. Match results come out mid-March, and if accepted, applicants begin residency training in July. Applicants who don't match can participate in something called SOAP (Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program) to try to obtain an unfilled residency position. Alternatively, they may consider applying again next year with an improved application. Some ways to strengthen one's application is by gaining US research experience, by clearing USMLE Step 3, by doing externships and observerships, and by building new contacts.

CONCLUSION

All this may seem so overwhelming. You're probably asking yourself, "All these exams, all these requirements. Will I ever make it?". Remember, every ocean began as 1 droplet, every building was once 1 brick. Similarly, your glorious Road to US Residency begins with Step 1. Make Step 1 your focus, hit it hard and the momentum will carry you through your journey. I can't emphasize enough about the wonders the right mindset and attitude can do. Be in harmony with your conscience about why you want to pursue this pathway and how badly you want it. Today I am the senior sharing this with you. Tomorrow, you'll take the baton and carry the responsibility of continuing this cycle of guidance for generations to come.

"Imagine being on your deathbed and standing around your bed is the ghost of the ideas, dreams, and talents that were given to you by life. And for whatever reason, you never went after that dream, you never acted on those ideas, you never used those talents. And there they are staring at you with large angry eyes, saying we came to you and only you could have given us life. And now, we must die with you forever."

The question is- if you die today, what ideas, what dreams, what abilities, what gifts...would die with you?"





Alumni Interviews

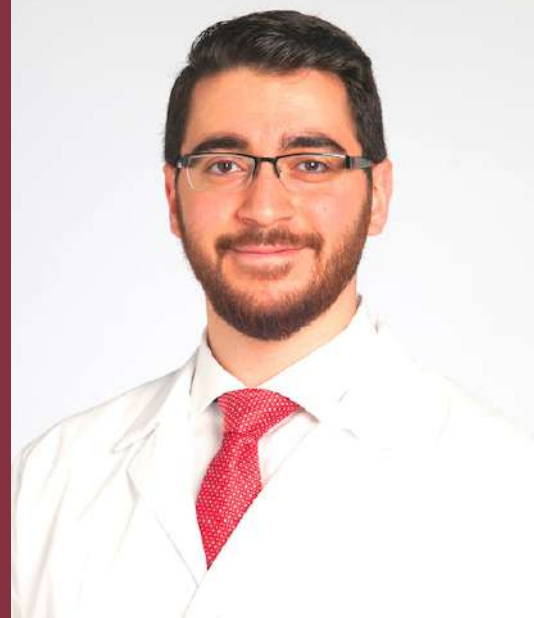


DR. KHALID JAZIEH

CLEVELAND CLINIC

INTERNAL MEDICINE

RESIDENT



Greetings, Dr. Khalid. It's such a pleasure to be talking to you! Many congratulations on your match in Internal Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic. This is incredible news for all of us at Alfaisal, and we couldn't be more proud!

LET'S BEGIN WITH A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF. HOW WOULD YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE PEOPLE READING THIS? WE'D ALSO LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS.

Thank you! I appreciate your kind words, and I'm proud to be one of the many graduates representing Alfaisal. I'm originally Syrian, grew up in the US, and moved to Saudi Arabia a little over 10 years ago. Each one of these countries has played a major role in shaping my life. I enjoy spending time with my family, cooking and trying new food, reading, and I also love cats.

HOW DO YOU RECALL YOUR EXPERIENCE OF GIVING THE STEPS AND THEN APPLYING FOR THE MATCH?

They were stressful times of course, but alhamdulillah, like all things they passed. You have to focus on what you want to achieve and push through, till you come out on the other side.

WE DON'T GET TO INTERVIEW A CLEVELAND CLINIC RESIDENT EVERY DAY! PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE AT CLEVELAND CLINIC.

It's great alhamdulillah! I'm really enjoying my time and learning a lot. Obviously, the patient population we get here is incredible, with people of varying backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses from across the country and all over the world. We get a lot of education as formal lectures and as rounds teaching by some of the best clinicians in their respective fields. But above all, I really love the culture of support and the warm environment here, particularly within the residency program. All my co-interns are great to be around, and the 2nd and 3rd-year residents I've worked with have been amazing teachers and supervisors. I've learned more from them than anyone else.

HOW IS YOUR INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENCY COMING ALONG? WE'D ALSO LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR FUTURE PLANS, PARTICULARLY YOUR INCREDIBLE PASSION FOR ONCOLOGY.

It's off to a great start alhamdulillah, for all the reasons I mentioned above. With regards to fellowship, I keep asking my seniors for advice and looking for mentors. If you're interested in a competitive fellowship, you need to work hard from day one. You should be an excellent resident of course, but also shine beyond just your clinical duties, either by research, teaching, and other forms of "extracurricular" achievements. And from what I can tell, a lot of people aren't completely sure what fellowship they want at the start of their residency, and that's okay. You can take time to explore different specialties, just make sure you're doing an excellent job throughout.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WISH YOU KNEW EARLIER REGARDING STEPS AND/OR MATCH THAT WOULD LIKE TO MENTION?

During my medical school time, I wish I had known a little earlier about the importance of the USMLE and doing US electives. I might have been able to plan ahead a little better. I'm very happy with how things turned out, but during the interview season, the uncertain period before the Match results, I realized there were things I could have done to maximize my chances, including reaching out to programs earlier to express my interest. I would also recommend applying to A LOT of programs. The more you apply to, the better your chances.

FOR AMBITIOUS MEDICAL STUDENTS READING THIS (JUNIORS AND SENIORS), WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU SHARE WITH THEM? THIS COULD BE RELATED TO STEPS, US RESIDENCY, ELECTIVES OR EVEN MEDICAL SCHOOL.

The most obvious advice would be to do your best at each component of the application - Step scores, US clinical experience, and letters of recommendation, GPA, research publications, etc. No one can be a perfect candidate, but the better you do in each of these, the higher your chances. For those who don't just want to Match, but are aiming for the top institutions, being a great all-round candidate isn't enough. You also need to stand out considerably in something that most other applicants don't have. Those could be through significant research experience, learning biostatistics and being capable at it, significant extracurricular projects or humanitarian volunteering work. There are thousands of applicants with good scores and letters. To make it to the elite places, you need to stand out. Keep in mind, you don't NEED to match in a top hospital to have a great career. One of the many advantages of training in the US is that there are so many great programs that can provide excellent training, which includes even hospitals that aren't famous. Having a well-known institution on your CV is just a bonus, not a necessity.

And above all, enjoy the process, learn as much as you can, and do your best regardless of what you choose and where you go.

DR. LEEN RADDAOUI
GEORGE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENT



LET'S BEGIN WITH A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF. WHERE ARE YOU DOING YOUR RESIDENCY? HOW WOULD YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE PEOPLE READING THIS? WE'D ALSO LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS :)

I'm originally Syrian, spent some time in Texas before doing medical school at Alfaisal in Saudi. I'm currently doing an internal medicine residency at GW and loving it. My hobbies include cooking, baking, and eating, on repeat. I'm also interested in philosophy, science, psychology, and I like to draw/paint from time to time (not very great at it!).

HOW DO YOU RECALL YOUR EXPERIENCE OF GIVING THE STEPS AND THEN APPLYING FOR THE MATCH?

I'm originally Syrian, spent some time in Texas before doing medical school at Alfaisal in Saudi. I'm currently doing an internal medicine residency at GW and loving it. My hobbies include cooking, baking, and eating, on repeat. I'm also interested in philosophy, science, psychology, and I like to draw/paint from time to time (not very great at it!).

PLEASE SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN THE CITY YOU'RE IN RIGHT NOW. ANY ADVICE FOR PEOPLE CONSIDERING IT FOR RESIDENCY?

Washington is a beautiful city to live in. You feel like you're a tourist every day and it is bustling with diversity. The only downside is how expensive it is.



HOW IS IT LIKE TO BE AN INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENT AT YOUR HOSPITAL (GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL)? WE'D ALSO LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR FUTURE PLANS (FELLOWSHIP, ETC.).

I love working at my hospital because the environment is extremely friendly and non-malignant. Everybody is accepting and welcoming for the most part. In terms of fellowship, I'm not certain what I want to do yet and I'm trying to keep an open mind!

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WISH YOU KNEW EARLIER REGARDING STEPS AND/OR MATCH THAT WOULD LIKE TO MENTION?

I would say that I would have focused more on extracurricular activities and leadership building skills, as being an effective doctor isn't just about knowledge, while knowing a lot of facts is important, there are other traits that are very valuable that we don't encourage as much as we should.

FOR AMBITIOUS MEDICAL STUDENTS READING THIS (JUNIORS AND SENIORS), WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU SHARE WITH THEM? THIS COULD BE RELATED TO STEPS, US RESIDENCY, ELECTIVES OR EVEN MEDICAL SCHOOL.

My advice would be to put yourself out there, take every opportunity that you get and try to learn from everybody and anybody. Focus on interpersonal skills and time management because you can't learn these things from books and they will help you become a better resident, and above all, stay humble and stay pleasant.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LOVE TO MENTION, EVEN IF ABSOLUTELY RANDOM? :)

Thank you for this opportunity to share a bit of my life with you, and remember, keep moving forward, stay humble and keep up the great work! :)

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Until next time...

