



DR. DIVYA KARSANJI

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INTERNAL MEDICINE

What attracted you to medicine?

I find a lot of strength and wellness in talking to people. I've worked in research and in an office setting, and I found that independent work just wasn't for me. While doing research, a doctor took me to the dialysis unit to meet patients and I absolutely loved it. I loved the patient and doctor interaction and I could really feel the privileged nature of a physician and their patient. I wanted to build bonds like that with people and I knew medicine would be a way I could do that. I went to Australia and I studied there prior to the difficult road of returning home to Canada.

What attracted you to your specialty?

I chose medicine for the patient interaction. I ended up really enjoying the diagnosis and management of patients, but most important to me was always the interaction with the patient. I did an elective in dynamic psychotherapy, which I loved and felt that aside from a career in psychiatry, one could be patient centred and enjoy the patient interaction in other fields of medicine too. I wanted a career which would provide me with a lot of interaction and to build relationships with people in their most vulnerable time, to build trust. I chose internal medicine to pursue hematology, which I will be starting in July in Winnipeg. A hematology patient is very pragmatic and this is one situation where truly, their health is out of their control. A lot of the interaction between a hematologist and their patient is providing empowerment and a listening ear. I specifically recall when I decided it was for me: it was when a hematologist explained to a patient that undergoing treatment after treatment was not the only definition of fighting, rather deciding to be comfortable at the expense of a long life was also a choice to fight.

What do you find the most rewarding in your residency training?

Gladly, the decision to pursue medicine was a good one: I get to speak to patients every day and learn their perspective and be involved in their decisions. To me, there is nothing better than getting to meet someone and be a part of their decisions and having them trust me to help them. I am never afraid to tell them when I don't know something and so far this has served me well. Getting to sit with someone, laugh about things, help them with even small tasks makes me the most happy.

What do you find the most challenging in your residency training?

I think currently, the pandemic is the most critical and the most challenging part of training. It gives us this time to reflect on the fact that medicine is like no other job. In this job, we accept a certain level of risk, even if we are risk adverse, for the benefit of our patients. The most challenging part is always when an outcome for a patient is not what was expected or anticipated, but for this I have a great support system of friends that I have built in residency who help to unburden those difficult situations.

What energizes you outside of residency?

I spend a lot of time with my family and friends and getting the hard stories out of the way leaves time to enjoy each others company. I studied in Australia which has a great social culture and relies so heavily on local business, so my favourite activity has been exploring new independent restaurants and locales with my friends. I draw every single day, I also do a lot of yoga, which I find really very relaxing.