

COMMUNITY FOCUS

Natalie Santa-Pinter

What does being a doctor mean to you?

I want to be a doctor because it is the perfect profession that intersects my love of science with my love of people. Understanding human physiology is just as important as understanding human sociology because of the diversity of diseases and personal situations in the world. To be the person who helps diagnose, manage, and heal patients who have a variety of psychosocial factors affecting their health is extremely rewarding. I also really enjoy research and understanding complex processes.

What was a challenge you faced? How did you overcome it?

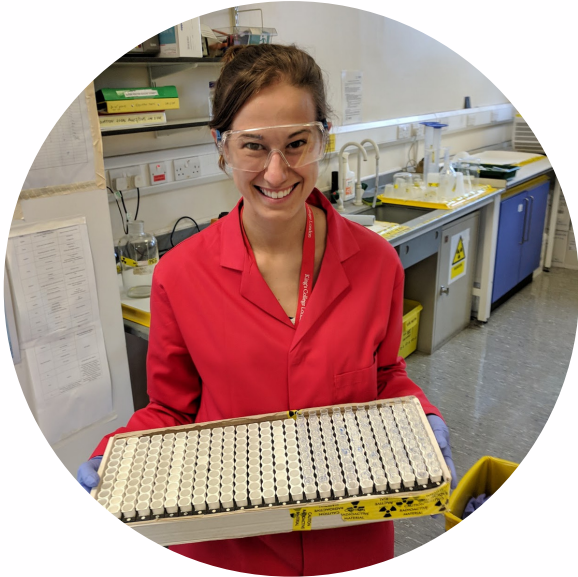
I felt that because I didn't have anyone in my family who was a doctor I would be limited, which I was, in a sense. I had to find my own mentors and apply for opportunities that were not normally in my reach. I took chances, changed my major, studied abroad, volunteered, did research. I applied for every scholarship under the sun to support myself and to pay for school. I failed in many ways doing these things, but I didn't give up.

What advice would you give to your younger-self?

Embrace the uncomfortable. I would not be where I am today if I only strived for comfort. There will be times in your life when you don't feel like you have any money, support, or guidance and the only thing keeping you going is your own determination and will-power. You'll feel uncomfortable asking someone you don't know to shadow them, to mentor you, to do research with them, or to help you. Don't let that stop you. You'll feel uncomfortable being different or sticking up for what you believe. Embrace it. Overcoming challenges are what will mold you into a well-rounded person and allow you the experiences your peers may not have.

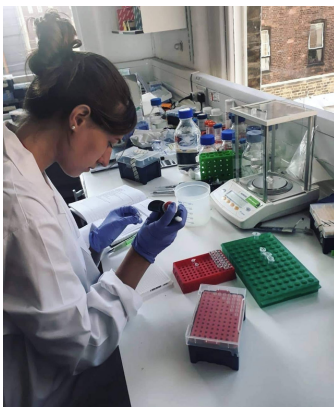
What would you tell younger students who are exploring health careers?

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Your teachers, your counselor, your parents, your friend's parents - these are all really great resources. You also have the internet at your fingertips. Spend some time researching different career fields and imagine yourself in those positions. You might find something you really like. Also, don't be afraid to close the door on an opportunity or career that is not right for you. As long as you have momentum, you can keep moving. Without it, you can't turn around or change your path.



Meet Natalie Santa-Pinter, MS4 *First Generation Medical Student*

Natalie is from Choctaw, Oklahoma and grew up in a population of ~10,000. In her free time, Natalie likes to play soccer, volleyball, and piano. You can also catch her running, working out, skiing, hiking, camping, wine tasting, traveling, listening to podcasts, writing, and cooking.



Conducting Research in London



Holding a Scope in the GI Unit



Gowning up for the Surgery Suite



White Coat Ceremony

OU-TU School of Community Medicine

4502 E 41st Street, Tulsa, OK 74135 | O: 918.660.3500 | E: tulsascm@ouhsc.edu