Going to Medical School: Choosing Between a D.O. and a M.D.

Adept Marketing

We see it on their name tags and office doors all the time: Dr. Blank, “M.D.” or “D.O.”, but what do they mean? M.D. stands for allopathic while D.O. means osteopathic, and many students entering medical school have trouble deciding which one they should study for.

The traditional model school for M.D.’s contains a two year curriculum full of mainly just the basic sciences. After that, usually the student has to do two years of clinical clerkships. D.O. schools, on the other hand, focus more on the prevention side of medicine. They do take a lot of the same courses as M.D. students throughout med school, but they also learn a whole host of other techniques, including the philosophy of osteopathy.

Osteopathy focuses more on the holistic approach of medicine and preventative measures. These types of courses show the students how certain ideas that are presented promote the more therapeutic ways of medicine to stop ailments and diseases from continuing to be a problem for their patients, or from ever happening to begin with.

Deciding what school is best for you just depends on your personality and what you want to do every day after you graduate. Right now, osteopathic schools are opening up at a much faster rate than allopathic ones. Whichever one you decide on will be rewarding financially and spiritually, since, when it all boils down, your main goal as a doctor of any kind is to help patients to the best of your ability. But, it’s worth saying that job applicants at this time will probably find work faster if they studied in a D.O. program.

Whatever choice you make won’t hinder you from applying for almost any residency program you choose in any specialty you pick. You’ll still be a customary physician, in the eyes of the public and new patients. But, like with any school, you may want to check up on the background of the institution. The type of doctor you want to be may not be the deciding factor in which direction you go.

In the end, it may simply be a wonderful moment in the school’s history that you admire, or a well-known instructor that you seek advice from to use in your still developing medical career.