

SINGAPORE

Personal experiences encourage Erina Firdous, Dhasil to enter the medical field at NTU

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Khan Mohamed Mohamed Dhasil (left), 21, and Erina Firdous Mohamed Rabeek, 19, are among 190 students from the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) who donned their white coats on Wednesday (August 12). (Photo: NTU Singapore)



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SINGAPORE: The white coats worn by Erina Firdous Mohamed Rabeek, 19, and Khan Mohamed Mohamed Dhasil, 21, may look similar.

However, the journeys that led them to the medical field are vastly different.

For Erina, losing her grandfather during the COVID-19 pandemic opened her eyes to the fragility of life and the importance of a healthcare worker's support when patients and families are going through difficult times.

For Dhasil, the experience of helping design experiments to tackle drug-resistant bacteria on a long-duration space mission opened her eyes to the challenges of medicine in the future.

They were among 190 students from the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) who donned their white coats on Wednesday (12 August). The symbolic ceremony marked the beginning of their journey to becoming doctors.



This year's cohort size is the same as the previous cohort, which is the largest in the history of Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine to date. (Photo: NTU Singapore)

LOSS OF GRANDFATHER OPENED EYES TO THE HUMANITARIAN SIDE OF MEDICINE

Erina's interest in science has been budding since childhood, but personal experiences exposed her to the humanistic side of medicine.

One of the most impactful was the loss of her grandfather abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite not being able to be by her side due to travel restrictions, the support of the healthcare team to her family made Erina realise how important their role is when someone is at their most vulnerable.

"I think my motivation to pursue medicine came from an understanding of life and how fragile human life is," Erina told Mediacorp NEWS.

These experiences made Erina see how medicine combines two things that are close to her, namely science and humanity.

"I think in the future, I want to be someone that others can count on, who can help and support them when they are in their most difficult moments.

"I think medicine combines science and human values perfectly, and that combination is what really interests me," she added.

WANTS TO BECOME A DOCTOR WHO IS 'ALWAYS PRESENT'

The journey to becoming a doctor is not something that Erina takes lightly.

She realizes that her journey is still long, with many challenges to overcome.

However, in the end, Erina hopes to "become a sincere doctor, who is able to use her skills and knowledge" to help society.

In fact, when asked how she wants to contribute to patients and the healthcare sector, Erina said that she wants to be "always present".

"The healthcare sector can be very challenging, not only for patients but also for doctors. What I hope to learn and achieve is to be someone who is always there even when things get tough," she said.

For Erina, receiving the white coat also marked a transition to a new phase that allowed her to develop not only in terms of knowledge, but also as an individual.

FAMILY EXPERIENCE, RESEARCH SHAPED ASPIRATIONS IN MEDICINE

For Dhasil, her interest in medicine also stems from personal experience.

Her parents are from rural India. Whenever she visits there, she sees her relatives and grandparents reluctant to seek medical treatment and instead prefer to rely on traditional treatments.

She also sees residents struggling with limited access to healthcare services and inaccurate medical information.

"Entering the medical field is my way of joining the fight against misinformation and access to healthcare," she said.

Her interest grew through her involvement in an experiment on drug-resistant bacteria currently underway on the International Space Station (ISS).

The project, which combines physics, biology and chemistry, opened his eyes to the fact that medicine does not stand alone, but is interconnected with various fields.

"Through this project and other projects like it, I saw that medicine is actually a very interdisciplinary field," he said.

It also made him think about the challenges that may await the future generation of doctors.

"In the future, we don't really know what challenges we will face. It may be related to AI, it may also be related to the field of chemistry.

"So as doctors and healthcare professionals, I think what we need to do is focus on the preventive aspect of medicine, so that we are prepared to face various challenges that may arise," Dhasil added.

Source: Mediacorp News/bk

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