

The morning after all students learnt that this year's A Level and GCSE exams were cancelled, I received an email informing me that I had received an offer to study medicine at Imperial College London. After much hard work to get through each stage of the medical school application process including the notoriously difficult entrance exams and nerve-racking interviews, I was ecstatic.

I am confident that a major factor in my success to gain an offer was completing an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification), which allowed me to delve deeper into a topic of my choice beyond A Level curricula. I wanted to focus on a medical topic for my EPQ, and I have had a strong interest in plant-based nutrition since I became vegan when I was 15 years old. Since I discovered the irrefutable correlation between our animal-centred diets and the occurrence of disease, I have been educating myself and spreading my knowledge loud and far.

After the long task of deciding a topic focus, my EPQ title evolved into: **A whole-food plant-based diet, the human gut microbiome and the onset of cardiovascular disease: a review of the scientific literature.** As I heard in a podcast I listened to recently, our healthcare systems have become more like 'sickcare' systems, limited to treating the symptoms and not the root-causes of lifestyle-related diseases responsible for millions of deaths worldwide. Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death globally, and with heart disease being the most common pre-existing health condition in those who sadly died of COVID-19, its prevention with healthy lifestyle habits should still be the focus of conversation.

Completing the EPQ gave me the chance to analyse scientific articles, collate ideas into a coherent essay and finally deliver my findings at presentation evening in February. I think the proudest moment of my whole EPQ journey was right after my presentation, as I realised how great an impact my project had. Members of the audience came up to me saying how they had no idea of the effect of a plant-based diet, and that they or their loved ones have cardiovascular conditions which this information could drastically help. Since schools closed in March, I have taken on extra hours at my part-time retail job to save some money before university. I've had many inspiring conversations with co-workers and emailed out my EPQ essay to anyone willing to read it, so the positive and no doubt life-changing effects of my EPQ are still propagating.

With all the spare time I have now since exams were cancelled and lockdown began, I decided to set up a blog. I intend to use this site to share my knowledge about veganism and plant-based nutrition along with my other interests of mindfulness and sustainability to a wider online audience. I also write about my experience of applying to medical school in the hope of helping aspiring medics, and once I get to Imperial this autumn (if predicted grades allow me too!) I will post about life as a medical student in London.

If you would like to see my blog, you can visit it at [www.theconsciousmedic.com](http://www.theconsciousmedic.com) and please feel free to contact me via the contact details to read my EPQ.

# the conscious medic



RECIPES / VEGANISM

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JUNE 26, 2020

ABOUT ME

