Pan-Canadian Survey of Medical Students’ Knowledge and Experiences Regarding Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) Completion and Preparation Activities

This survey is a collaborative initiative of the following organizations:

- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC)
- Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS)
- Fédération médicale étudiante du Québec (FMEQ)

Who is this survey for?
All Canadian first year medical students, whether or not they have completed the MCAT and/or undertaken MCAT preparation activities, are eligible to complete the survey. (Click here for additional MCAT information)

[If students click for additional information]

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is a standardized multiple-choice admissions test. It is computer based and includes three sections: Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences and Verbal reasoning. Eleven Canadian medical schools use the MCAT. Six Canadian medical schools including Quebec’s four medical schools do not use the MCAT because it is not translated into French.

There is a wide range of commercially available MCAT preparation activities used by medical school applicants to prepare for the test. These activities may include MCAT practice tests, preparation courses and private tutors. A medical student wrote about the costs associated with applying to medical school; including those costs associated with MCAT registration and preparation activities*. He estimated that MCAT study materials cost between $100 - $200 and MCAT preparation courses cost between $450 - $1,700.

*White AN. The high cost of being an (aspiring) medical student. CMAJ. 2008; 179(11):1228.

What is this survey about?
You will be asked questions about your knowledge and experiences regarding MCAT use, MCAT preparation activities, medical school admissions and background demographic questions.

What will happen to my personal information?
Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. Data will be collected anonymously (without your name or any identifying information) and maintained confidentially by AFMC for subsequent analysis and storage.

Due to anonymity, we will be unable to match participants to their own data or withdraw their answers once they have been submitted electronically.

Who will have access to the results of the survey?
Survey results will be stored, processed and analyzed by the AFMC. Your medical school will
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not know of your individual participation nor have access to your individual data. If you choose not to participate there will be no negative repercussions with respect to your medical school record.

All reports from the survey will be limited to aggregated data and so you will not be individually identified in any publications, presentations and/or reports resulting from this project.

Anything else?
This survey may include questions about sensitive issues that you may not want to answer, even anonymously. If this is the case, you can decline to answer and move to the next question.

This survey should take 20 minutes or less to complete. To help avoid duplicate entries, we ask that you please complete the survey in one session. Thank you for participating!

Should you have any questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- For survey technical difficulties, contact Tania El Hindi; telhindi@afmc.ca.
- For the survey’s research component, contact Dr. Mark Hanson; mark.hanson@utoronto.ca. Dr. Hanson is Associate Dean, Admissions and Student Finances, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.
- For issues related to your treatment as a participant or ethics related concerns, contact Rachel Zand; rachel.zand@utoronto.ca or 416 946 3389. Dr. Zand is Director, Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto at. All enquiries will be confidential.

Are you currently completing your first year of medical school?
- Yes, I am in my first year of medical school
- No, I am in my 2nd year of medical school or above

[If students select “No, I am in my 2nd year of medical school or above”] We greatly appreciate your interest in the Pan-Canadian Survey of Medical Students’ Knowledge and Experiences Regarding Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) Completion and Preparation Activities, however the survey is aimed at students currently completing their first year of medical school. As such, and in order to meet the study goal, we will not be collecting your information. Thank you

I understand the above and consent to participate in this survey.
- Yes, I understand and agree. Click 'next' to continue to the full survey.
- Yes, I understand but I am unable to participate at this time.

[If students select “Yes I understand but I am unable to participate at this time.“] I am unable to participate because:
Select all that apply
- I am too busy
- I am not interested in this issue
- I am tired of completing medical school student surveys
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Part A – Demographic Questions

1. Please identify the medical school at which you are registered

   □ University of British Colombia Faculty of Medicine
   □ Cumming School of Medicine (University of Calgary)
   □ University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
   □ University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine
   □ University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine
   □ Northern Ontario School of Medicine (Lakehead and Laurentian Universities)
   □ Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry (Western University)
   □ Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine (McMaster University)
   □ University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine
   □ University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine
   □ Queen’s University School of Medicine
   □ McGill University Faculty of Medicine
   □ Université de Montreal Faculté de Médecine
   □ Université de Sherbrooke Faculté de Médecine
   □ Université de Laval Faculté de Médecine
   □ Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine
   □ Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Medicine

2. On the day you started medical school, what was your highest level of education?

   □ College certificate or diploma, i.e. Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP).
   □ Some undergraduate degree training.
   □ Completed Bachelors’ degree.
   □ Some graduate school training.
   □ Completed Master’s level degree.
   □ Completed Doctoral level degree.
   □ Other, please describe…

3. Prior to starting medical school, please indicate the domain of study in which the majority of your post-secondary studies were completed?

   □ Arts, social and behavioural sciences and law
   □ Humanities
   □ Basic sciences, biomedical and health sciences, allied-health disciplines
   □ Engineering, mathematics, statistics, computer and information sciences
4. Which do you identify as?
   - Male
   - Female
   - Do not identify as male or female

5. What is your birth year? __

6. Please report your ethnic/cultural background: Select all that apply.
   - North American Aboriginal (e.g. North American Indian, Métis, Inuit)
   - Arab
   - Black (e.g. Black African, Black Caribbean, Black North American, etc.)
   - Chinese
   - Filipino
   - Japanese
   - Korean
   - Latin American
   - South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
   - Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)
   - West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
   - Caucasian
   - Other, please describe

7. Which language(s) can you speak, read, write and understand well enough in order to confidently complete a university level examination? Select all that apply.
   - English
   - French
   - Other, please describe

8. Is one or more of your immediate family members a health care professional?
   - Yes
   - No

9. Size of community in which you lived upon entry to high school:
   - Population below 1,000
   - Population between 1,000 and 9,999
   - Population between 10,000 and 29,999
   - Population between 30,000 and 99,999
   - Population between 100,000 and 1,000,000
   - Population greater than 1,000,000
10. Regardless of your dependency status, please select your parents’ or guardians’ combined income before taxes for last year:

- Under $10,000
- Between $10,000 and $19,999
- Between $20,000 and $39,999
- Between $40,000 and $59,999
- Between $60,000 and $79,999
- Between $80,000 and $99,999
- Over $100,000
- I do not know/I am not sure

11. What is the approximate annual income before taxes of your personal household for last year?

Your personal household income includes that of you or you and your spouse or common law partner if in a shared household; not including parental or guardian income.

- Under $10,000
- Between $10,000 and $19,999
- Between $20,000 and $39,999
- Between $40,000 and $59,999
- Between $60,000 and $79,999
- Between $80,000 and $99,999
- Over $100,000
- I do not know/I am not sure
12. What was the highest level of education attained by your parent(s)/guardian(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent/Guardian</th>
<th>Did not graduate from High School</th>
<th>High School Diploma/ Certificate</th>
<th>College/ Technical Diploma</th>
<th>University Degree, Bachelors’ level</th>
<th>Graduate or Professional University Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian2</td>
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<td>Parent/Guardian3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Occupation of Your Parent(s)/Guardian(s) on your 16th birthday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian1</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian2</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian3</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay-at-home parent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manual labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer/ farm labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer/ farm labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skilled craft, trade, clerical sales or service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreperson, supervisor, middle management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technician, semi-professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-employed professional</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part B – Medical Students’ Knowledge and Experiences Regarding Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) Completion and Preparation Activities

This survey will provide a better understanding of medical students’ admissions experiences regarding MCAT use and preparation activities. The information gathered will also help quantify the total costs of MCAT experiences, which are separated into four categories displayed in the chart below: registration, preparation, test day and opportunity costs.
N.B. We recognize that some medical students get into medical school on their first attempt and that some medical students get into medical school after multiple attempts, i.e. over multiple application years.

Application year(s) refers to the number of year(s) a student submits medical school applications and not the number of medical schools applied to in any one application year.

When answering the survey consider all of your MCAT completion and MCAT preparation activities across all application year(s).

1. What is the number of application year(s) you completed?

   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - More than 6: ____

2. How many times did you register for the MCAT?

   - I never registered for the MCAT
   - 1 time
   - 2 times
   - 3 times
   - 4 times
   - 5 times
   - 6 times
   - More than 6 times: ____
3. What MCAT preparation activities/materials did you use? Select all that apply

- I never used any MCAT preparation activities/materials
- MCAT preparation materials
- MCAT practice test(s) (free)
- MCAT practice test(s) (purchased)
- MCAT private tutor
- MCAT preparation course(s) offered by a company?
- Other, please describe

[If students select “I never registered for the MCAT” in Question 2 AND “I never used any MCAT preparation activities/materials” in Question 3, the survey will skip to Question 15]

4. How many MCAT practice tests did you purchase (from any company) to prepare for the MCAT?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- More than 8:____

5. How many MCAT preparation course(s) did you take?

- 0
- 1
9

[If students select “1, 2 or More than 2” in Question 5 they will proceed to Question 6 and skip Question 7; if students select 0 in Question 5, they will proceed to Question 7]

6. Why did you decide to enroll in a MCAT preparation course(s)?
Select all that apply

- To organize my studying
- The preparation course provided a guarantee (i.e. exam readiness, score satisfaction, refund, etc.)
- To learn standardized test taking strategies
- To improve upon a previous MCAT score
- To obtain a competitive MCAT score
- Everyone else seemed to be taking one and I did not want to be at a disadvantage
- Other, please describe

7. Why did you decide not to enroll in a MCAT preparation course(s)?
Select all that apply

- MCAT preparation courses are expensive
- I did not have time due to the study demands of my university coursework
- I did not have time because I was working full time
- I did not have time because I was trying to gain relevant employment, research, and/or volunteer experiences for my medical school application(s)
- I did not believe that it was necessary to take a MCAT preparation course
- No MCAT preparation courses were offered close to where I lived
- I prefer to study on my own
- Other, please describe

8. Approximately how much money did you pay to attend MCAT preparation course(s)?

- $1,000 or less
- Between $1,001 – $2,000
- Between $2,001 – $3,000
- Between $3,001 – $4,000
- Between $4,001 – $5,000
- Between $5,001 – $6,000
- Between $6,001 – $7,000
- Between $7,001 – $8,000
- Between $8,001 – $9,000
- Between $9,001 – $10,000
- More than $10,000 (please estimate amount):_____
- Not applicable
9. Excluding the costs of MCAT preparation courses themselves, approximately how much money did you pay in total for other MCAT preparation activities/materials such as MCAT training materials, practice tests, etc.?

- $1,000 or less
- Between $1,001 – $2,000
- Between $2,001 – $3,000
- Between $3,001 – $4,000
- Between $4,001 – $5,000
- Between $5,001 – $6,000
- Between $6,001 – $7,000
- Between $7,001 – $8,000
- Between $8,001 – $9,000
- Between $9,001 – $10,000
- More than $10,000 (please estimate amount):_____
- Not applicable

10. How did you pay for the MCAT preparation activities you completed such as MCAT preparation courses, materials, practice tests course(s), transportation-related costs etc.?

- I paid for it myself
- My parents/family member paid for it
- I shared these costs with my parents/family member
- My parents/family member loaned me the money
- I had another type of loan (bank and/or government student loan)
- Other, please describe
- Not applicable
11. Approximately how much money did you spend on test day activities related to completing the MCAT such as transportation, accommodation, and/or food costs if you had to travel away from your home or university residence to take the MCAT?

- $50 or less
- Between $51 – $250
- Between $251 – $500
- Between $501 – $1,000
- Between $1,001 – $1,500
- Between $1,501 – $2,000
- Between $2,001 – $2,500
- More than $2,500 (please estimate amount): _____
- Not applicable

12. Did preparing for the MCAT affect the number of hours you were able to work (employment) during the academic school year, between academic years (summer job), or otherwise (regularly held employment of any form)?
Yes, I reduced my hours in order to have time to prepare for the MCAT
Yes, I did not take a job so that I would have more time to prepare for the MCAT
No, I continued to work the same amount of hours that I always have
No, I increased my hours to help save for the costs associated with applying to medical school
No, I did not normally have to work (employment) during the academic school years, between academic years (summer job), or otherwise (regularly held employment of any form)?
Other, please describe

13. Please estimate the income before taxes that you forfeited and would have received had you worked your normal hours during the academic school year, between academic years (summer job), or otherwise (regularly held employment of any form) instead of preparing for the MCAT:

- $1,000 or less
- Between $1,001 – $2,000
- Between $2,001 – $3,000
- Between $3,001 – $4,000
- Between $4,001 – $5,000
- Between $5,001 – $6,000
- Between $6,001 – $7,000
- Between $7,001 – $8,000
- Between $8,001 – $9,000
- Between $9,001 – $10,000
- More than $10,000 (please estimate amount):
- Not applicable

14. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: Select one for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a medical school applicant, MCAT preparation activities helped me perform better on the MCAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>As a medical school applicant, MCAT preparation activities were a good investment of time and money.</td>
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<td>As a medical student, MCAT preparation activities and/or MCAT completion helps me perform better in medical school.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

15. Please select which statement applies to you.
I only applied to medical schools with a MCAT admission requirement
- I applied to medical schools with and without a MCAT admission requirement
- I only applied to medical schools without a MCAT admission requirement

16. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: *Select one for each item.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The MCAT admission requirement at some Canadian medical schools limits applicants’ choice of schools to which they will apply.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total MCAT costs represent a financial hardship in the admission process for some applicants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada should have a standardized medical school admission test in both official languages (French and English).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

17. Please share any opinions you wish to contribute to this AFMC survey regarding the MCAT exam and MCAT preparation activities.