INTERNATIONAL MEDICINE:
SEWAGE CONCERNS IN RIO

As if the Rio Olympics weren’t challenged enough by the high incidence of Zika virus, the waters that will soon be filled with competing sailors and
swimmers off the shores of Guanabara Bay and nearby Copacabana Beach are polluted with raw sewage. With virus counts exceeding 1,000 per liter – 30,000 times higher than what is considered extremely dangerous in the US and Europe – Rio’s waters are plagued with infectious agents that waterborne virus experts argue can produce disease in 99% of individuals who ingest as little as 3 teaspoons of the contaminated water. While some diseases may be of little concern to the athletes and health experts, others, like flesh-eating-MRSA (

*Methicillin resistant Strep. Aureus*) pose great risks to the health of competitors.

The city became host to the upcoming 2016 summer Olympics due in part to a lengthy proposal promising to improve public sanitation and sewage concerns. An argument was made that hosting the Olympics would encourage the city to take much needed action that was ignored in the past. The goal was to treat 80% of the sewage that flows into their local water sources by 2016; however, recent tests by water quality experts show that little improvement has been made and Rio is no closer to solving their sewage problems than they were back in 2014. Can Rio get their crap together in time for the Olympic games? Officials state that it is unlikely, but as everyone has come to realize, it is far too late to change the hosting city now. Rio may soon become known as host to the crappiest Olympic games to date.

All information presented in this article was provided by the NY Times, Huffington Post, and the Atlantic.

**WORDS OF WISDOM:**

**JOURNALING 101**
Journaling is a great way to document your experiences for reference at a later date. Whether you simply make bullet points for each day outlining things that made you happy or writing detailed descriptions about your most recent shadowing experiences, both will provide you excellent material to look back on when you are preparing your personal statement, application essays and during interviews. As a medical student, it will be crucial that you keep track of experiences that moved you in some capacity; these can be challenges you faced, moments that were heartbreaking or elating. Whatever the situation, it will be important to have answers to common interview questions like "tell us a time when you overcame an obstacle during your 3rd/4th year rotations."

While you are far from residency interviews, similar questions may be asked of you in your medical school interviews, or you may be asked to reflect on such an experience for an essay. So why not start your journaling now so that you can fall into this routine?

Many people will argue that they don't need to journal because they'll remember these things. But from my own personal experience and from my discussions with medical students before me, it can be rather easy to get caught up in all the new experiences you'll be facing on a day-to-day basis and forget what you thought to be a life-changing incident just days before.

So go pick out a notebook and a pen and start jotting down some things each day that make you happy, and from there, start to keep track of some significant events in your life! I promise you, it will be worth it in the long run.
SUMMER READING LIST

MEMOIRS
personal accounts and experiences of medical personnel

- *The Soul of Medicine: Tales from the Bedside* by Sherwin Nuland, MD
- *Blue Collar, Blue Scrubs* by Michael J. Collins, MD
- *Hot Lights, Cold Steel* by Michael J. Collins, MD
- *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder (**global health interest**)
- *This Won't Hurt a Bit (and Other White Lies)* by Michelle Au, MD
- *The House of God* by Samuel Shem, MD

MEDICAL FICTION
novels with a medical theme

- *Trauma* by Michael Palmer
- *Coma* by Robin Cook
- *Bloodstream* by Tess Gerritsen
- *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green
- *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult
- *The Healer* by Christophe Fischer

For more non-fiction books like those listed above, please look at other novels
written by Palmer, Cook, and Gerritsen. Interestingly enough, they all received medical degrees and went on to pursue careers in writing rather than medicine.