

WHAT RESEARCH AND MEDICINE MEANS TO ME

I believe that scientific research is the foundation for the production of medicine and thus can propel humanity forward. It is irrefutable that research has always been relevant throughout history, and especially now surrounding the topic of COVID-19. Personally, the power of research has affected my own family by saving my father from an otherwise undefeatable cancer. Research and medicine go hand-in-hand by saving lives through the process of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

When I was just 12 years old, my father got diagnosed with stage 3 stomach cancer. This permanently changed the state of my childhood by exposing me to the harsh reality of sickness. Being that it is only me, my parents, and my younger sister here in the US, we were very scared because we did not have any relatives to lean on. We were very anxious about how we would stay strong during this time, and how we could afford all the medical expenses due to our financial standings.

After the jarring diagnosis, additional testing, and multiple checkups, we received the news that he could have a lifesaving operation. However, this was a very risky procedure on a sickness that already had a low survival rate. After thorough consideration with specialized physicians, we decided that it was the best option we had and decided to go through with it. The surgery was lengthy, as well as the hospital recovery. I vividly remember after-school trips to the ICU to see my dad hooked up to numerous wires and machines. Although I could not fully comprehend the situation, overhearing the doctors' conversations explaining the role of each machine and medication gave me hope. After my dad was discharged from the hospital, we were very relieved that the surgery went well. However, the

road to recovery was not over yet; he still had many rounds of chemo and radiation to endure. Both of these processes simultaneously weakened him, yet ultimately saved his life.

Oftentimes, I look back on this period of my life and am shocked at how, through the power of science, my dad was able to beat the very disease that almost took his life. Through this experience, I have learned how vital research and medicine are in regards to saving lives. Nonetheless, this never would have happened if it weren't for the care team that formulated his treatment and recovery. Since this event, I have always been interested in the research and development behind these practices. I think it is astonishing how these studies brought my father from a life-threatening situation to the healthy state he is in today. One day, I hope to be someone that makes a positive difference in medicine and be part of a care team that saves lives, just like how they saved my father's.