

Antara Gupta

Mr. Speice

Independent Study & Mentorship

29 August, 2018

**Neurology: The Mind Curers**

**Research Assessment**

**Date:** 29 August, 2018

**Subject:** Neurology Career Outlook

**MLA Citation:**

“Careers in Neurology.” *CareersinPsychology.org*, Careers in Psychology, 2018,

[careersinpsychology.org/neurology-careers/](http://careersinpsychology.org/neurology-careers/). Accessed 29 Aug. 2018.

Davidson, Tish, AM. "Neurology." *The Gale Encyclopedia of Nursing and Allied Health*, edited

by Jacqueline L. Longe, 4th ed., vol. 5, Gale, 2018, pp. 2467-2469. *Health & Wellness*

*Resource Center*,

<http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3662600781/HWRC?u=j043905010&sid=HWRC>

<http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3662600781/HWRC?u=j043905010&sid=HWRC>

Hoyle, Brian Douglas, and Fran Hodgkins. "Neurologist." *The Gale Encyclopedia of*

*Neurological Disorders*, edited by Deirdre S. Hiam, 3rd ed., vol. 2, Gale, 2017, pp.

855-857. *Health & Wellness Resource Center*,

<http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3662900270/HWRC?u=j043905010&sid=HWRC>

<http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3662900270/HWRC?u=j043905010&sid=HWRC>

**Assessment:**

After finding out that my passion lies in the medical field, I have decided to combine this interest with my love for the brain and its complex structure. From a small age, I have always wanted to help others and create an impact on other people's lives. Furthermore, the idea of interacting with so many different patients and their stories whilst also continuing medical research on the side is quite appealing because there a balance is constructed. Thus, this year, I will be studying neurology because it combines my two biggest interests: learning about the brain and helping others. In the past, I was uncertain about this field because of the amount of schooling and dedication needed, but after getting an opportunity to shadow Dr. Dike, a neurologist at Affinity Neurocare, I am convinced that all the hard work will be worth it. As a result, the purpose of this assessment is to find out more about what a neurologist does and analyze the career outlook for this field.

In the article "Neurologists," it became evident that neurologists not only work with the brain and spinal cord, but they often have to deal with other body systems. This is because the Central Nervous System is responsible for sending signals to all parts of the body, and different diseases can lead to problems elsewhere. This reminded me of how when I was shadowing Dr. Dike, he told me about how once a patient came in complaining about a headache and right arm pain, and upon further inspection, it became evident that the patient had 90% blockage in his/her coronary artery, which made the patient in immediate risk for a heart attack. As a result, it is quite important that even after specializing, doctors remember all about other body systems as well so that they can help patients holistically. Generally speaking, however, most of the common diseases and problems that neurologists have to deal with are headaches, seizures,

muscular dystrophy, degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and strokes.

Another article entitled "Neurology" also talked about the same thing, thus validating that most neurologists only deal with a handful of problems. Because of this, many neurologists choose to specialize in one branch of neurology, such as pediatric neurology, cerebral neurology, or genetic neurology. Although I have not gone through all the rigorous training and coursework to even reach that point where I would have to make such a decision, I think I would like to work in general neurology because of the wide range of cases that I would encounter. However, pediatric neurology sounds quite interesting, so I would like to interview at least one pediatric neurologist this year.

Furthermore, sub-specializing in neurology leads to even more years of schooling. To start off, four years of undergraduate studies, four years of medical school, four years in residency, and 1 year for specialization are needed. In total, thirteen years of schooling are required in order to become a neurologist. During undergraduate studies, a student can pursue any major they desire as long as he or she takes the MCAT and completes the pre-med requirements. In order to stand out in the pool of applicants for medical school, many students choose to participate in extracurricular activities and internships. Medical school is usually divided into two years of instructional time and two years of clinical rotations; thus there are more opportunities for real-world exposure, and this helps aspiring doctors decide what they want to specialize in. After receiving a medical degree, students then have to take either the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) or the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX). Upon passing one of these tests, these new doctors can now begin their residency. During residency, students are paid a minimal amount of money,

which ranges about \$50,000. Afterwards, however, after becoming a practicing physician, the median salary is \$208,000. As a result, I feel as if this long journey is worth the end result of getting to do what I love while maintaining a comfortable lifestyle.

The article, "Careers in Neurology" brought light to the fact that there is an overgrowing fear that many careers in the future will get replaced by robots and other mechanical, more precise devices. This holds quite true for neurosurgery, where precision is required. However, a neurologist primarily listens to patients and diagnoses them. The emotional intelligence and empathy needed to be a doctor cannot be replaced by a robot. Thus, in the future, my job will still be safe from technological domination. In fact, given the recent advances in medicine, the lifespan of humans has increased significantly, which has led to more of the elderly population. Since neurological degeneration and disease is strongly correlated to age, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that the employment outlook for neurologists is growing rapidly at a rate of 14%.

Another trend in recent years for neurologists has been opening up their own practices. Such an arrangement allows neurologists more flexibility with their hours and how they wish to deal with patients. Because of this, many doctors suggest having some business and/or entrepreneurship experience so that the concept of opening up your own practice does not seem too difficult. Last year in ISM, I was exposed to the business world, and I thoroughly enjoyed that experience, so I am excited to see how that knowledge can help me in the future. In fact, in college, I hope to minor in business so that I can further develop my understanding on this topic. However, even though business knowledge is helpful for a physician who is starting his or her own practice, it is not required. Many doctors hire a business professional to look after their

practice from a financial standpoint so that they can focus on what they do best: diagnosing patients.

As a neurologist, connections are quite important because usually a primary care physician refers patients to you. Thus networking is a very important skill, and even when I was shadowing Dr. Dike, he said that in the past five years, he has used so many of his college and medical school connections to help him with work. He also stated that many doctors join professional organizations geared towards their field or subspecialty. For neurology, some of the most common professional organizations are the American Academy of Neurology and the American Neurological Association. These organizations were also mentioned in the article, "Neurologists".

As a neurologist, there is ample job security due to the high percentage of growth and the high salary. Although there is a lot of schooling involved in order to become a neurologist, it is necessary so that the best and most holistic level of care is provided to patients. With neurology being such a complicated and intricate field, there is still much yet to learn, and I hope to use ISM to learn more about my future career.