

# Medicine in the US

## Quotations

“At the same time, with the German system, a lot of times you’ll be 24, 25 and you are a doctor. That’s very interesting when you’re actually dealing with patients. You might have the medical knowledge but do you have the maturity? Are you taken seriously? Do you know enough about life in order to just even understand the patient as a human being?” (Dr. J)

“Particularly in surgery, it’s a macho thing: where the men are men and the women are men. We used to have a saying when I was a resident in New York: If you are on call every other night, you’re missing half the cases. That’s kind of the mentality.” (Dr. Franey)

“Newest and greatest is not always the best. [...] I applaud my colleagues that try to push the envelope, try to find newer and better ways. Most of the time, though, if you really step back and you look at it, you might not do it that way.” (Dr. Franey)

“That’s always the best part about surgery. You have a problem and for the most part you fix it and you move on and that patient is taken care of.” (Dr. Franey)

“General surgery is a dying breed. Nobody wants to do general surgery because the hours are long, unpredictable, and high-risk, as far as liability goes.” (Dr. Franey)

## Vocabulary

Source: Merriam Webster online dictionary [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

### Medical Vocabulary

**surgery:** a branch of medicine concerned with diseases and conditions requiring or amenable to operative or manual procedures; the work done by a surgeon; a room where surgery is performed

**MD:** [from Latin: *medicinae doctor*] doctor of medicine

**residency:** [from residence – the act or fact of dwelling in a place for some time]; in this context: a period of advanced training in a medical specialty that normally follows graduation from medical school and licensing to practice medicine

**private practice:** a professional business (such as that of a lawyer or doctor) that is not controlled or paid for by the government or a larger company (such as a hospital)

**MCAT:** short for: Medical College Admission Test; a standardized test designed to evaluate qualification for admission to medical schools

**clinical rotation:** the time medical students spend as members of a medical team so they gain practical knowledge of the work in hospitals

**premed:** short form of premedical; preceding and preparing for the professional study of medicine

**physical exam:** short form of physical examination; an examination of the bodily functions and condition of an individual

**ward:** a division in a hospital where a number of patients often requiring similar treatment are accommodated

**fellowship:** the period of medical training after completing a specialty training program (residency)

**malpractice:** a dereliction of professional duty or a failure to exercise an ordinary degree of professional skill or learning by one (such as a physician) rendering professional services which results in injury, loss, or damage

**elective surgery:** surgery that is scheduled in advance because it does not involve a medical emergency

**emergency surgery:** *surgery* that needs to be performed immediately to deal with an acute threat to a patient's life or long-term health

**laparoscope:** a fiberoptic instrument inserted through an incision in the abdominal wall and used to examine visually the interior of the peritoneal cavity

**incision:** cut, gash; specifically: a wound made especially in surgery by incising the body

### General Vocabulary

**extracurricular activities:** not falling within the scope of a regular curriculum

bright-eyed and bushy-tailed: happy and full of energy

**acclimated:** adapted to a new altitude, climate, environment, or situation

**differential:** a difference between comparable individuals or classes

**maternity leave:** time off from a job given a mother to take care of a newborn child

**ramification:** consequence, outgrowth

**negligent:** failing to exercise the care expected of a reasonably prudent person in like circumstances

**brick-and-mortar:** relating to or being a traditional business serving customers in a building as contrasted to an online business

**bulk:** magnitude; the main or greater part

**niche:** here: a specialized market, a place, employment, status, or activity for which a person or thing is best fitted; can also mean: a recess in a wall especially for a statue, or something (such as a sheltered or private space) that resembles a recess in a wall

**push the envelope:** to go beyond the usual or normal limits by doing something new, dangerous, etc.

## Discussion Questions

- 1) How is the medical system of the U.S. different from Germany's?
- 2) Universities are often looking for 'well-rounded' individuals when it comes to admission to medical schools. What personal characteristics and extracurricular activities should they be looking for?
- 3) How could hospitals and society make it easier for women to be both mothers *and* doctors?
- 4) What are the pros and cons of having a private practice vs. working in a hospital?
- 5) To what degree should / may medicine focus on profit?
- 6) Discuss new technologies such as robotic surgery, laparoscopy, etc. vs. older but established techniques. Are innovations always an improvement?
- 7) Due to financial considerations, many non-emergency surgeries are performed at night. Discuss the pros and cons of this practice and its implications for patients, medical staff, and hospitals.