



## remarks

**A Satisfied Doctor** At least one physician believes that medicine is still the most personally satisfying profession in America. Despite administrative frustrations, wise choices can make medicine a rewarding career.

BY STEVEN P. DAVISON, DDS, MD



I recently read an article in this section of *Unique Opportunities* entitled

“Career Disenchantment,” (May/June, 2002). The writer discussed how the high cost of education and stress of the medical practice diminished his satisfaction with his medical career, and that if the young physician had known what he now knows, he may not have studied medicine. My experience has many parallels with this physician’s, but I have come to completely separate conclusions.

I am a plastic surgeon in my third year of practice at a university hospital in a large east coast city. According to articles in the May/June issue of *Unique Opportunities*, this was described as the most difficult environment in which to practice medicine because of the influence of managed care. I do predominantly reconstructive work and struggle with remuneration and appropriate payment for highly specialized services on

a daily basis. In addition, I work at a major university and am, therefore, under all the constraints of institutionalized medicine with very little control of my own destiny, unlike what I would have in private practice. However, I could not be more satisfied with my choice of a career in medicine.

I had always wanted to be a plastic surgeon. However, the opportunities to do so were difficult to exploit. I started

off training in the United Kingdom where less than three percent of people go to universities (as opposed to the 30 percent who go to universities in the U.S.) I had the opportunity to leave high school in 11th grade for a guaranteed slot in dental school, which I took over trying to get into the highly competitive medical school class the following year. I became a dentist, took subspecialty training in America, and finally went back to medical school when the opportunity arose. I am board certified in plastic surgery and otolaryngology and practice predominantly head and neck reconstructive

**I think the main reason people develop dissatisfaction with medicine is that medical school, as Dr. Yung discussed, deals a lot with medical education but lacks in preparation for the other stresses involved in practicing medicine.**

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