

Q: Why would an evolutionist become a doctor?

A: Can a medical doctor do his job well without believing in evolution? Some people claim that a physician without a proper understanding of evolution does not have an adequate knowledge base from which to practice medicine.

For instance, geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky claimed, “Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.” Dr. Charlie Webb, an emergency room physician, said, “Evolution is the basis of biology, biology is the basis of medicine. You’re messing with something important when you mess with evolution.”

Several years ago Dr. Michael Dini, a professor of biology at Texas Tech University, felt so strongly about this issue that he refused to write letters of recommendation for pre-med students who did not accept evolution as fact. According to his website, “The central unifying theme of biology is the theory of evolution, which includes both micro- and macro-evolution, which extends to ALL species. How can someone who does not accept the most important theory in biology expect to properly practice in a field that is so heavily based on biology?” He indicated that the student must answer the question “How do you think the human species originated?” with a sincere reference to evolution.

These opinions notwithstanding, many advances in medical science have come from scientists who did not accept evolution. For example, Louis Pasteur’s belief that life could only come from life led to his proof of the law of biogenesis and the debunking of the theory of spontaneous generation. His discoveries were the basis for landmark inventions such as pasteurization and vaccinations for rabies and anthrax. Other prominent creationists in the field of medicine include Joseph Lister, who first promoted the principles of antiseptic surgery, and Dr. Raymond Damadian, inventor of the MRI scanner.

Acceptance of evolution does not make someone a better physician. On the contrary, acceptance of evolution raises a very basic question: “Why would an evolutionist become a doctor in the first place?”

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2008/07/21/why-would-evolutionist-become-doctor>

below, in full:

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These opinions notwithstanding, many advances in medical science have come from scientists who did not accept evolution. For example, Louis Pasteur’s belief that life could only come from life led to his proof of the law of biogenesis and the debunking of the theory of spontaneous generation. His discoveries were the basis for landmark inventions such as pasteurization and vaccinations for rabies and anthrax.⁴ Other prominent creationists in the field of medicine include Joseph Lister, who first promoted the principles of antiseptic surgery,⁵ and Dr. Raymond Damadian, inventor of the MRI scanner.⁶ Our own [Dr. David Menton](#), who taught anatomy at the Washington University School of Medicine, said this about evolution and medicine:

If evolution were thrown out of consideration, it would have no negative impact (in medicine)—it plays no necessary role in either the teaching or practice of medicine.

This is not to imply it’s not believed by most or that it doesn’t come up. It does come up from time to time, but from the lectures I’ve attended, when it does come up, it’s mentioned in passing as almost a confession of faith. It doesn’t contribute materially to the topic.

The professors can’t spend too much time on evolution, as they have too much real medical knowledge to get across to the students. Spending a lot of time on evolutionary speculations just wastes time. If you remove evolution, there’s nothing in the whole realm of empirical science that you can’t pursue.⁷

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According to evolutionary dogma, the first living organism assembled itself spontaneously and then, by means of [mutation](#) and [natural selection](#), slowly began to evolve into more complex organisms, ultimately producing modern man. Evolutionary progress at every step could only happen when the newer organisms out-competed the inferior (that is, less evolved) ones for limited resources. The key to evolutionary success is death of inferior organisms.

Going to medical school and devoting one's life to helping the weakest among us to survive should be the last thing a consistent evolutionist would want to do. From the evolutionary point of view, man is just another rung on the evolutionary ladder and is evolving to something even "better." If evolution is a good thing, having produced us *en route* to a better product in the future, why would an evolutionist want to help the weak to survive? Doesn't the practice of medicine itself work against the primary driving force of biological progress? If evolution is really the key to progress, then the physician generally interferes when he helps those who are "less fit" survive and reproduce.

Darwin himself understood this issue:

With savages, the weak in body and mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilised men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed and the sick; we institute poor laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of everyone to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands who, from a weak constitution, would formerly have succumbed to smallpox. Thus the weak members of civilised society propagate their kind.

No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but, excepting in the case of man himself, hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.

The aid which we feel impelled to give to the helpless is mainly an incidental result of the instinct of sympathy, which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts, but subsequently rendered in the manner previously indicated more tender and more widely diffused. Nor can we check our sympathy, even without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature. . . . We must, therefore, bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviving and propagating their kind.⁸

Thus, the evolutionary worldview is not only unnecessary for the practice of medicine, but actually contrary to the humanitarian nature of the medical profession. A biblical worldview explains the [origin of disease and death](#) as part of the curse that marred God's perfect creation after man sinned. God loves us and mercifully enables us to relieve much suffering through medical science. Physicians are not working against the driving force of nature, but against the effects of a sin-cursed world.

So, I would challenge Dr. Dini to ask his students who are evolutionists, "Why do you even *want* to be a doctor?" Aren't doctors ultimately working at odds with the process evolutionists hold dear?

Footnotes

1. Theodosius Dobzhansky, *The American Biology Teacher* 35 (March 1973):125–129. [Back](#)

2. Jodi Wilgoren, "[Seeing Creation and Evolution in Grand Canyon](#)," *The New York Times* Online. [Back](#)
3. Michael Matthews, "[Dunce Cap for Creationists?](#)" Answers in Genesis; Michael Dini, "[Letters of Recommendation](#)," Texas Tech University website. [Back](#)
4. Ann Lamont, "[Louis Pasteur](#)," *Creation* 14 no. 1 (1991):16–19. [Back](#)
5. Ann Lamont, "[Joseph Lister: Father of Modern Surgery](#)