

# Do What You Love!

Dr. Tito Daodu

The ability to practice as a surgeon is an incredible privilege, one that involves people coming to you at their most vulnerable moments and putting their trust and lives in your hands. I was attracted to general surgery for its universality and the incredible impact that surgeons have the potential to make in the lives and health of their patients. I could imagine no other profession that would allow me to be a detective, a scientist, a repairman, an advocate, and a confidant, all at the same time. Added to that is the ongoing balance between humility and pride as I tackled the intellectual, technical, even emotional challenges of training in general surgery. But it was the desire to have the ability to not only impact someone's health, but also the potential to completely change the trajectory of a patient's life that stimulated my interest in pediatric surgery. As I complete my last year of residency in General Surgery, I look forward to the future of my pediatric surgery fellowship and eventual career with great excitement.

My experiences have made a tremendous contribution to my desire to become a pediatric surgeon. As a child immigrating to Canada under difficult circumstances and growing up in inner city Winnipeg, I was challenged by the inequities I saw and experienced, especially with regard to safety, security, and health. After we came to Canada, we didn't know many people and our resources were very limited. My mother worked three jobs while going to school part-time. She was determined to make sure all of our needs were met. As I looked around at many of my peers, I discovered that the level of safety and security that I felt was not universal — in fact, far from it. This spurred me as a teen to become a volunteer and tireless advocate for children and youth everywhere. To that end, I worked with numerous community organizations as volunteer, staff, and member of boards of directors, connecting with youth in Winnipeg's core-area, organizing and developing homework, sports, and mentorship programs. I continue to mentor many of those children today. I also worked with and developed a pilot program for high-risk and gang-involved youth, designed to connect them with positive mentors, educational and social support, and alternatives to street life. That passion to reach out to and help children and youth has carried throughout my life.

I am cognizant that I have the privilege to do many things I could not have dared to dream of as a child. Having lived in four different countries, on three different continents, always having an avid interest in global health and social justice, it was important to me to be able to do work that has the potential for both local and global influence. I did research on childhood pneumonia in Nigeria that helped lead to a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support accessible oxygen therapy in community hospitals across Nigeria.



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Additionally, while a medical student at the University of Manitoba, I co-developed a novel project in Tanzania in partnership with the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) focusing on adolescent gender and reproductive health. As a result, an ongoing partnership between CPAR and the university continues to send medical students to deliver this culturally appropriate, participant-driven, and locally supported curriculum.

I am attracted to the diversity and scope of pediatric surgical practice. Pediatric surgeons are in a unique position of being able to confidently care for infants, children, and adolescents presenting with an array of both common and rare surgical diseases. The global burden of pediatric surgical disease also drives my desire to work in the burgeoning field of global health, but after all is said and done, at the end of the day, my desire to do pediatric surgery is motivated by my desire to wake up every morning and know that I get to do something I love. That allows me to be an advocate every day for the surgical care of young ones who may not be able to speak for themselves. A job that lets me be silly and cheerful and childlike. In that sense, the drive towards this work is somewhat selfish. Because "doing what you love is the cornerstone of having abundance in life" (Wayne Dyer). Well then, bring on the abundance!

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