

NEWS RELEASE

UP graduate overcomes sickle cell complications to achieve medical dream



Meet Dr Samuel Imevbore, the proud recipient of a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB) degree, having battled through the complications of sickle cell anaemia to achieve his dream of becoming a doctor.

Amid the celebratory atmosphere during the University of Pretoria's (UP) autumn graduation season, one graduate's remarkable story stands out as a testament to resilience and determination. Samuel Imevbore (25), the recipient of a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB) degree, had an unconventional path to success, having been diagnosed with sickle cell anaemia at the age of 14, and surviving its many complications since then.

"I'm immensely relieved to be graduating alongside my peers," Imevbore said. "There were moments when I doubted whether I'd reach this milestone, but here I stand. Navigating the rigorous demands of medical studies while managing my health condition posed significant challenges. It was far from easy, but I was determined to persevere, no matter the obstacles in my path."

Hailing from Nelspruit in Mpumalanga and raised in Kempton Park, Gauteng, Imevbore's aspiration to become a doctor was met with daunting obstacles. There were numerous hospital visits to better control his condition,

being diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy in 2019 and being admitted to hospital for pulmonary emboli in 2021.

Throughout his medical studies, Imevbore's resolve was put to the test. Chronic illness often left him grappling with severe fatigue and pain, yet he remained steadfast in his commitment to his education.

"The option to pace myself was never there, because [studying] medicine always required more of me than I could comfortably give," Imevbore said. "It created most of my academic stress in my earlier years, and I started finding my stride only once I had prioritised a healthy work-life balance."

He adds that experiencing the patient's journey first-hand has made him a more empathetic and understanding doctor.

"My struggles have equipped me with a unique perspective that I can now use to better serve my patients."

Imevbore says he owes his family and friends a debt of gratitude.

"Their unwavering support has been my rock during the toughest of times. I've also been supported by people everywhere I go. This includes people at church, in the choir, at work, the gym, my residence Ukuthula, in my rotation group and so many more. Their encouragement and guidance played a pivotal role in shaping my journey and instilling in me the belief that I could overcome any obstacle."

Looking ahead, Imevbore is eager to embark on the next chapter of his career with a sense of purpose and determination. He wants to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

"My journey has prepared me to face whatever challenges lie ahead, with resilience and compassion."

Not only has Imevbore achieved his dream of becoming a doctor, but he has also inspired countless others to overcome their own obstacles and pursue their aspirations with unwavering resolve.

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the

best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2024 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of Law, Veterinary Science, Accounting and Finance; Agriculture and Forestry and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their 2024 World University Rankings (WUR). UP was the only South African university featured in the 2023 World University Rankings for Innovation (WURI), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za