Personal Statement:

"Is it Erythema multiforme or vasculitis?" Four years ago, I was hospitalised with symptoms of conditions I could not pronounce. After two weeks of intensive care, doctors could not ascertain my illness, leaving me confused and frustrated. This intensely personal experience, first ignited my curiosity in medicine. I was left with an enduring fascination for medical challenges and respect for the discussion and teamwork that could help manage or ideally overcome them.  
I have also been drawn to pursue a career in healthcare from my volunteering experiences, inspired by the visible empathy and tireless human endeavour to provide remedies for the problems which afflict us. Interning in an Oncology department I observed in-patient interactions and resident work, and was struck by the combination of a surgeon's skill and attentiveness to patient concerns - putting the most anxious patient at ease. The surgeon demonstrated to me the importance of informed consent to uphold full patient autonomy. One experience which has stuck with me was scrubbing up to join the Head of Surgical Oncology in the operating room: whilst I observed a limb salvage surgery for a soft tissue sarcoma of the leg, it struck home that in the past we would have performed an amputation, emphasising how medical advancements have improved patients' quality of life without compromising medical outcomes.  
With a keen appetite to learn more about patient care in oncology, I began volunteering at CanSupport - an NGO providing India's largest palliative care programme for cancer patients. I worked with palliative care teams to document case histories and develop them into case studies: these resources would provide a personal insight into a patient's story and highlight the organisation's positive impact on them and their families. I distinctly recall the case of a six-year-old girl diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, whose parents had given up work to care for her. CanSupport provided treatment, counselling and the family's first warm meal in weeks. With her eventual recovery, it became clear to me that medicine is not only about saving lives, but transforming them. I learnt that every patient has their own unique story and that there is a symbiosis between a patient's physical health and mental well-being (including of their caregivers).  
I was awarded Student of the Year in Biology by my school for exceptional dedication to studies and proactively asked questions in Biology and Chemistry to develop my interest in Oncology. I was appointed Vice President of the National Honour Society for my academic achievements, where my responsibilities gave me the opportunity to hone valuable leadership skills, including communication and delegation.   
Alongside academia, I have pursued extracurricular activities to better understand and support my local community.  Passionate about environmental protection, I led a campaign to lobby a local supermarket chain to offer sustainable alternatives to plastic bags.  Furthermore, as an executive team member of Model United Nations (MUN), I have appreciated how learning to debate in a respectful and open-minded manner is far more important than 'winning' an argument. I recognise this principle is essential to a multi-disciplinary medical team when deciding what plan of action is in the best interest of the patient. Finally, as a keen sportsman, I enjoy playing football, basketball and volleyball for my school team. Sports remind me of the importance of communication and morale-building to bring a team together.  
I believe that the complexities of a medical career are epitomised by the field of oncology, combining novel research and targeted treatments with compassionate palliative care. Through my personal and internship experiences, my ambition to pursue a career in medicine has only grown. I am eager to explore the range of disciplines taught at medical school and embrace the breadth of knowledge and skill that this career has to offer.