



# Healthcare Beyond Earth

## REFLECTIVE PIECE ON LIBRARY RESOURCES

Rockey Chen | Osler Essay Contest | 10 October 2017

*Anders B. Earthrise [Internet]. 1968. Available from: <https://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/alsj/a410/AS8-14-2383HR.jpg>*

Having completed an undergraduate degree (B.Sc.) here at McGill University, I was aware of certain McGill library services, such as WorldCat and PubMed, and that I could access many published works on campus in print or online. That being said, I had always been quite reluctant to use these resources out of unfamiliarity, while Google and Wikipedia searches came more easily to me. However, thanks to the opportunity of this essay contest and motivation to explore these library resources, I dived head-first into the research tools at my disposal as a McGill student. The first elements of these services that I uncovered were the online availability of helpful librarians and the ease with which I can access these online resources, even from an off-campus site without the use of a VPN. This was particularly useful during the summer when I was working from home and could access databases, books, and articles from various libraries, including the Osler Library which I found out contains mainly but not exclusively works on the history of medicine. I also learned about the Interlibrary Loans service (ILL) via the Colombo system. I was taken aback by how much academia and scholarly work is shared between libraries and institutions across the world.

Moreover, as a young researcher, I discovered the plethora of results that are unrelated to my topic of interest but will nonetheless appear from a vague search query on WorldCat; consequently, I have since developed a better instinct for search terms and refined advanced searches. For my specific essay, after discussing my ideas and working essay outline with my mentor Dr. Robert Thirsk, I became aware of better ways to structure my essay and what gaps of knowledge I needed to fill to create a coherent and focused essay. I continued my research and understood the importance of using strategies to scope the literature with summaries and review articles. From those, I could find reference lists filled with relevant sources of information. In addition, my outline and research guided me to look up associated topics. As my essay progressed and my skills as a researcher grew, I was proficient at verifying details and finding citations to come up with examples to support my ideas.

The Osler Essay Contest has been a great opportunity to develop researching skills, discover the value of my University's library resources, and delve into subjects that I am passionate about – space exploration and medicine.