



“Docs Talk Story”: A novel way of using podcasts to provide insight into career options for medical students

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CONTEXT

Deciding on a specialty is a significant stressor for students as it represents a commitment and lifelong dedication to a certain field of medicine. Students have a limited amount of time in medical school to experience the endless number of specialties and are now faced with the additional barrier placed by COVID-19, which has temporarily reduced opportunities for students to gain clinical experience. Without sufficient and varied exposure, students experience increased difficulty deciding with confidence which field is the best fit. Although we can't replace the value of experience, we sought to address some of these gaps through Docs Talk Story (DTS). Due to its accessible and convenient nature, podcasts are becoming increasingly popular as an avenue of sharing information.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the podcast, Docs Talk Story, is to assist in career exploration at John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) by providing students with more insight and exposure to the wide range of specialties available in medicine and to the way their practices may be unique in Hawaii. Through the sharing of stories and advice, we hope to inspire and encourage students, and create a platform that connects future and current doctors in Hawaii.

METHODS

The process for podcast production begins with reaching out to local physicians based on personal contacts, student requests, or through the help of JABSOM administration. We then tailor our standardized question set to our guest's specialty and use it as a guide for the recording, which is done at JABSOM. Editing is done as needed and episodes are uploaded to Buzzsprout and embedded into our DTS website. Listeners can access the past and current episodes from either of these avenues, as well as through Apple podcasts. New episodes are released every two weeks and subscribers are notified via email. Listeners provide their thoughts on the efficacy of the podcast via a standardized feedback form.



Enze Ma, MS2, interviewing Dr. Russell Woo.

KEY MESSAGE

DTS hopes to provide valuable perspectives and advice to medical students while on their journey to becoming future doctors and community leaders. DTS strives towards providing a safe space for doctors to talk about the reality of medicine in Hawaii and aspects of medicine that may not be heavily discussed in medical school. Topics discussed include a typical day in the life, experiences with private practice, pathways into academic and research medicine, work-life balance, and advice on navigating sensitive topics with patients.

DATA

Feedback Survey Data (on a scale of 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree).

- DTS helped me to learn more about what it looks like to practice in this specialty in Hawai'i: **4.85**
- DTS can be a valuable asset to helping medical students navigate the decision of what specialty to pursue: **4.92**
- I was inspired or encouraged by hearing the stories shared on this podcast: **4.77**

TARGET AUDIENCE

Those who work in career advising, alumni/ community engagement, curriculum development, and online content creators.

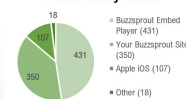
CONCLUSIONS

Although DTS launched only a couple months ago, we have seen promising results regarding the effectiveness of a podcast medium in career advising and medical education. In the first 4 months of DTS, we have published 9 full episodes and have received a total of 914 listens. Per analytics provided by our podcast provider, we expect future episodes to have approximately 89 listens each, which is consistent with the number of subscribers (90 as of 1/15/20).

Cumulative Downloads of "Docs Talk Story" Podcast by Month



Downloads by Source



We have found DTS to be an incredible avenue to emphasize the doctor shortage in Hawaii, to remind medical students of the essence of medicine, and to strengthen connections between the public and the providers in Hawaii. Among many others, the podcast has served not only as a space to talk about the impact of COVID-19 and health disparities in Hawaii, but as a reminder of the privilege it is to care for patients in their most vulnerable time.

Future plans for DTS consist of expanding our audience to reach the outer islands, possibly by listing our podcast in public directories, such as Spotify or Apple. We also hope to eventually include JABSOM graduates in residency as guests, as their experiences will undoubtedly offer valuable insights for medical students at JABSOM.