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Podcasting as an Instrument of Change in Academic Medicine

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To the Editor: Podcasting is an effective and underused instrument that trainees in academic medicine can employ to act as agents of change. The popularity of audio and visual educational learning materials like Boards&Beyond, OnlineMedEd, and Sketchy demonstrates younger medical professionals prefer media- to text-based alternatives for medical education.\(^1\) For instance, there are currently over 200 specialty-specific medicine podcasts.\(^2\) However, the market for medical podcasts is far from saturated, and starting a medical podcast has never been easier: equipment is cheap and the technical barrier to entry is low. We advocate for trainees, who are well-situated to identify dogma within traditional medical beliefs and to advocate for new ways of thinking, to use podcasting to promote change within academic medicine.

In general, podcasting has 3 main benefits for trainees:

1. Creating a podcast enables trainees to explore the scientific literature and develop critical thinking skills. In addition, podcasting requires entrepreneurship, media production skills, and communication skills. These skills may be of substantial utility in a trainee’s future career.

2. Interview-based podcasts enable trainees to speak with physicians and scientists with whom they share common interests. These interviews can also serve as opportunities for trainees to build connections with potential mentors.

3. Podcasting allows trainees to influence the field of academic medicine by broadcasting ideas. Whether covering the latest research on anti-aging therapies or systemic causes of inequity, podcasts provide trainees with the opportunity to change minds in academic medicine.
To put our ideas into practice, we created a podcast titled The External Medicine Podcast (https://externalmedicinepodcast.com/). Since launching in February 2021, we have explored numerous topics, including metformin as a potential gerotherapeutic, the utility of antipyretics to treat fever, and the economic principles behind vaccines. Our experience illustrates the ease with which a trainee may be able to reach thousands of minds in a relatively short period of time via a podcast.

Podcasting is a new and powerful instrument for change within academic medicine. The sooner trainees use this instrument, the faster they can advocate for change within the field.

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