

RESIDENT VOICE

Embracing information overload



Laura Dover, MD, MSPH



Caleb Dulaney, MD

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The reasons we each pursue a career in oncology are in some ways overlapping and in other ways distinct. But, as we look toward the future, we are all faced with the same challenges that lie ahead. What makes oncology arguably the most exciting field of 21st century medicine is also what makes it so formidable to its practitioners: its rapid pace of advancement.

If I am honest, early in my training, this fast pace disheartened more than invigorated me. I was constantly bombarded with new publications, while at the same time struggling to learn the current standard of care. Each time I opened my inbox, I felt I was losing ground. What's worse, I came to realize there was no light at the end of the tunnel. There was no point I would reach in my career where I would finally have time to catch up. As an oncologist, it is unsettling to continually worry there may be a breakthrough your patient will never hear about simply because her physician was unaware of it.

The fact is that growth in the number of reported scientific results over the last decade alone has been logarithmic, posing a growing critical barrier for practicing oncologists striving to stay current on the best available cancer care.¹ This is also, without doubt, a contributing factor to rising rates of resident physician burnout.² At the same time, practicing physicians have a growing disgruntlement with mandated, formalized continuing medical education (CME) that is often costly—both in monetary value and time spent—without affording corresponding educational value.³

The upside? Big problems are often the gateways to big advancements. My first reaction to information overload was the same as mine to any challenge: to commiserate with my co-residents, of course. While I was bemoaning our crumbling system of effective oncology education, my co-resident Caleb was opening an email newsletter conveniently describing the most pertinent highlights of the day's national news. He posed the question, "Wouldn't it be great if we had a resource like this for cancer news?" To my ears this was reminiscent of my partner's universal response to any variety of my complaining, "There are no problems, only solutions."

That day in the resident room, QuadShot News was born. QuadShot News is a web-based daily newsletter for oncologists to easily and efficiently stay informed of recent medical literature and policy developments that influence

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Dr. Dover is a PGY-5 resident physician in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). **Dr. Dulaney** is a practicing radiation oncologist at Anderson Regional Cancer Center in Meridian, MS. Drs. Dover and Dulaney are co-creators of QuadShot News (www.quadshotnews.com).

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clinical practice. Unlike existing platforms that deliver tables of contents with a list of verbose titles, we understand that combining ease and entertainment with education enhances learning.⁴ With this in mind, we intentionally format succinct blurbs to enable readers to learn in a quick, engaging manner with as little medical jargon as possible.

In the past year, QuadShot News has steadily grown to reach over 10% of practicing radiation oncologists nationwide. I attribute our initial success to two key factors: a powerful mission and powerful collaboration. For the past year, Caleb and I have been mission-obsessed. We are always brainstorming ways we can make our educational platform more effective,

more efficient, and more engaging. Focusing on our mission rather than our product ensures we solve what we set out to do.

Finally, continual collaboration with our co-residents, mentors, colleagues and friends at other institutions frees us from being limited to our own strengths. Together we can capitalize on information overload to become a stronger, more equipped field as we inevitably enter the next era of oncology.

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