BDS AND BEYOND: AN INTERVIEW WITH BIANCA COVEVA AND HALIMA KOLEOSO

BDJ Student sits down to talk to the duo from Newcastle Dental School about their podcast, BDS and Beyond

Why did you set up the podcast?

It's a funny story. We had both been appointed as the BDA social media reps for Newcastle University and were chatting about the kind of content we were planning to create. It kind of just came out that we were both separately thinking about starting a podcast, we literally just blurted the word 'podcast' out at the same time! During our discussions, it became clear that a podcast would be a really good way of sharing information with other dental students. We realised that information in this format directed towards dental students didn't really exist, compared to the wealth of content aimed at medical students.

How much support did you get from the dental school in doing so?

Creating this podcast would have been impossible without the support from the dental school. They absolutely loved the idea from the moment we pitched it.

The creative process was directed by us, but the technical side was undertaken by the Digital Media team within the Faculty of Medical Sciences. Neither of us are tech savvy in the slightest, so a lot of credit must go to the media team for helping us to record and edit the podcast.

All of our guests were either current or previous members of staff within the Dental

School, every single one of whom were incredibly willing to give up their precious time to record with us, for which we are very grateful.

The introductory jingle was written and performed by the Dental School's own choir; while the artwork was designed by Harry Craig, a current dental student.

All in all, this podcast was a home-grown project, with every element having input from various members of the Dental School team.

What kind of content do you discuss?

Each episode has a theme; however, we are guilty of veering off topic sometimes! We discuss things like professionalism, private practice, paediatric dentistry and applying to dental school to name a few. While the content is primarily based on the experience at Newcastle University, many of the things we talk about can be applied to any setting within any of the Dental Schools. So much so, that even if you're not from a dental background, you can enjoy the episodes and take something from them, as the media team did. They really enjoyed listening to our discussions during recordings.

Why do you think it is a good way of students learning and engaging?

The content has been designed for students by students. We pride ourselves on this, as we feel that a lot of the content produced for students

BDS AND BEYOND

HOSTED BY

BIANCA & HALIMA

has been created by clinicians that were students a long time ago. Priorities and opinions change once you qualify, and it was important to us that the content is relatable to students in the position they find themselves now.

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These days, everyone and their grandmother has a podcast. Every millennial that has a meaningful conversation considers starting one up. Podcasts are a great way of accessing information on demand, for free, while doing almost anything else. In the fast-paced world we live in (well, pre-COVID-19), being able to learn something while going about your day to day life is invaluable.

Do digital resources suit how students learn, engage and interact more than ever?

Digital resources have for some time been an integral part of a student's learning

experience, more so now than ever with the recent pandemic. All teaching has been moved online, and although this has caused some disruption, we have felt that we have been well equipped to deal with this shift,

based on our learning patterns pre-COVID-19. In addition to webinars, podcasts have gained popularity in accessing information in a way that feels casual. Listening to our podcast is not like listening to a lecture, it's a group of people having an engaging and dynamic conversation in topics that are relevant to students of all stages.

There's something for everyone, those considering dentistry as a career and those who've qualified can all find something they can apply to their working lives.

What's the funniest moment you've had recording it?

The recording studio is located in the basement of the Medical School, and there are lots of doors in the vicinity. Bianca can never remember which door leads into the recording studio, so always ends up in the toilet instead, which Halima finds hilarious.

But, hands down the most iconic moment has to be during the paediatric dentistry

episode when Mrs. Rushworth burst out in Lady Leshurr's 'Queen's speech 4'—it was strangely topical and very dentally relevant. It's probably the most entertaining thing you will ever hear, promise!

That aside, if you give the podcast a listen, you will notice we laugh a lot in every episode and that's a testament to the environment we have at Newcastle Dental School. Clinicians and students are actively encouraged to break down the hierarchical barriers that can sometimes exist within institutions, this creates a friendly atmosphere which enables us to ask for help when we need it without the fear of judgement. It's an incredible place to study, and we're so grateful to have been given this opportunity.

What advice would you give to anyone setting up a podcast?

Go for it! Sometimes the fear of not knowing what you're doing or how others may perceive it can hold you back, but if you have a clear concept and plan it out thoroughly then you can't go far wrong. It is important to not focus on the number of listens you get, but the actual feedback from your listeners. We are so lucky to have received lots of support and positive feedback from our listeners and are thrilled to be able to make such an impact in the dental community.

Bianca Coveva and Halima Koleoso ■

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