Introduction

Too often medical students are pigeon-holed into set curricula and lose out on exploring other areas of interest while in medical school. The variety of experiences students bring to these institutions should be shared and time should be allotted for classmates to interact with faculty and each other in subject areas of interest within and outside the medical field. The idea to host a lunch-time lecture series was modeled after the increasingly popular TED Talks. TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a non-profit organization with the mission to bring thoughtful students together and spread ideas freely to the world.

Method

As often as scheduling allowed, sessions were scheduled in which three speakers were given 10-15 minutes each to present on any topic of their choosing. Faculty and staff were encouraged to take part alongside students by giving talks and participating as active members of the audience. In order to ensure a reasonable turnout, numerous invitations were extended to the entire medical school student body, faculty, and staff in addition to providing free lunch and course extra credit as incentives. Students and faculty were asked to provide feedback following each session.

Feedback

A total of 53 reflections were submitted via email for the first session, 38 for the second, and 22 for the third. The following is a sample of feedback received:

"I felt like it helped me get into the mindset of my potential future patients." - Jennifer

"I appreciated that Chris provided input from various men regarding condom use and the concerns or lack thereof for HIV among gay males." - Sarah

"I really appreciated hearing about the cultural influences in the spread of AIDS in Africa because I really had not given too much thought to this issue." - Ben

"After listening to Kayla’s lecture, I have a better sense of how the culture of sex in different societies can affect HIV transmission prevention." - Elizabeth

Future Goals

• Continue to host students and faculty who speak on a number of remarkable topics and experiences
• Spark meaningful conversation and interest in a variety of topics and each other
• Collaborate with other organizations to increase participation and diversity (currently trying to set up a TED Talk session with the American Medical Women’s Association — AMWA)
• Have TED Talks incorporated into the medical school curriculum in order to foster a deeper understanding of those with whom we will be learning and practicing medicine
• Implement this program at other medical schools

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