



Conversations about Education, Research & Patient Care

with Dean Mary Klotman

## Episode 2: A Conversation with MSTP Student Shree Bose

**Dean Klotman:** Good Morning I'm Mary Klotman, Dean of the Duke University School of Medicine. Welcome to my monthly podcast *From one Duke to Another*. This month I'm joined by Shree Bose. Shree is a second year student in our Medical Scientist Training Program which combines study in both basic science as well as clinical curriculum at the School of Medicine. When she graduates Shree will have both the MD degree and the PhD degree. The program takes on an average eight years to complete. So it's no small undertaking.

**Dean Klotman:** Welcome Shree.

**Shree Bose:** Thank you for having me.

**DK:** So physicians scientists do offer a very unique place in biomedical science because they really can translate basic discovery into clinical medicine. Obviously that career path, has really caught your attention. What was it about that choice that made you want to commit eight years to training?

**SB:** I think I was lucky to have a lot of really incredible mentors who were themselves physician scientists. I mean, one of my best mentors from undergrad, Dr Thomas Michel, who is actually a graduate of the Duke MSTP program, I think really embodied this sense of what it meant to be a physician scientist. To sort of go between being in the lab and working on our basic understanding of disease to really seeing the patient experience.

**DK:** Well it certainly helps to have a good role model.

**SB:** Yes. Absolutely.

**DK:** Very often, we don't know all these opportunities, so having an early role model certainly helps. There is a national shortage of physicians scientists. In fact the NIH did a study in 2014 to really ask the question how can we stimulate more careers in science? There's lots of different ways to get there. You've chosen the MSTP pathway. Can you talk a little bit about what your curriculum looks like?

**SB:** Yeah I you know I think it's great, especially to be at an institution that places a really great emphasis on research. I mean, the the medical student curriculum kind of is a perfect representation of that. You have that one year where all medical students do research. And I think that's really conducive to having MSTPs, but it's also really conducive to having these like dual

degree programs like the MBA the MPH. And our curriculum is a little bit unique in that, because it allows us to do all of the preclinical in one year and then you enter the wards with the group of students that you came in with. And I think that sort of bond between your class is something that cannot be emphasized enough as a really valuable part of this curriculum.

**DK:** It's really your support structure.

**SB:** It really is. It really is. And I can't imagine going through the second year without the group of people who I have gotten to know over the course of a year.

**DK:** Well it's no longer the new curriculum because it's been in place since 1966. But it's interesting to see that schools are adopting that approach now. So obviously it's really been a role model curriculum to develop. But you're about to take a fork in the road because your third year is the beginning of a longer commitment to science Where are you in your decision about what you're going to do?

**SB:** I am really interested in doing my PhD in cancer metabolism and working on understanding sort of the energetic underpinnings of cancer. And I think that aligns really well with my clinical interests and doing something on the hematology-oncology spectrum. And I'm excited for a career that's really going to be a conduit between these worlds of medicine and research.

**DK:** You couldn't have chosen a more exciting field. I think the discovery in cancer biology has been dramatic the last couple of years. If you were going out would you promote this to students considering it.

**SB:** I think that's a great question and I wish there was some sort of like BuzzFeed quiz that you could take online that would tell you if this path was right for you. But there isn't a cut and dry sort of answer as to whether this is necessarily the best path because it does take a lot of time and takes a lot of energy. And I think it really comes down to having these mentors, who for me were physicians scientists who had gone through the training and knew what having that MD/PhD sort of allowed them to do with their careers and being able to discuss where I saw myself in 30 years down the line and whether having an MD/PhD would help with those goals. I think that was the key for me.

**DK:** I'm assuming you're thinking oncology might be your area of practice?

**SB:** That is what I'm thinking currently. I just finished second year, so I went through clinical rotations this year, which was an absolutely eye opening experience. In so many ways I didn't think I would have the chance to actually experience medical school, I really had that chance this year. I think this year has especially convinced me that I'm either leaning towards pediatric hematology oncology or maybe towards the adult side. But, really cancer patients, being there through the experience of going through cancer treatments, is something that that's really meaningful, that really . . .

**DK:** And I can tell you as a physician scientist there's no greater satisfaction when you can bring your science interest and merge it with your clinical interest. To me it was always HIV. But when that all falls into place it's really magic and really exciting to be able to see the full spectrum of science and impact. So, good luck and I'm so looking forward to following your career.

**SB:** Thank you so much. And thank you for having me.

**DK:** My pleasure.

**Narrator:** From one do to another hosted by Dean Mary Klotman is a production of the Duke University School of Medicine. Tune in each month to hear discussions about important and timely topics related to medical education, science and discovery, and patient care. For more information please visit [medschool.duke.edu](http://medschool.duke.edu).