What’s the Problem?

Information about COVID19 in the news and on social media platforms is overwhelming, confusing, riddled with jargon and sometimes straight up wrong. Making it easy for the public to misinterpret facts or simply accept headlines and infographics at face value without checking with primary and/or reputable sources.

The nature of social media also allows for a perpetuation of this misinformation without recourse. Recall the one article floating around Facebook reporting that gargling salt/vinegar water could help prevent COVID19. We needed a source of simplified, reliable information about the pandemic for people outside of the health professions.

Medical students are in a unique position to translate the facts into easy to digest information since we have an arm in both the public and health professional worlds.

Cause Analysis

Root causes of this problem included:
• An overwhelming number of news articles and social media posts about COVID19 being released each day
• Lack of fact checking or analysis of primary sources in some of these posts
• Use of jargon that is not well understood by the general public

How Might We: Effectively communicate the most important and relevant information about COVID-19 to the general public in an easy to navigate format?

Visit www.coviddecoded.com and @COVIDdecoded

The website, blog, and social media pages were created for a general public audience. Core students rotate on an “on-call” schedule to edit blogs written by students from multiple schools, post to social media, update the website, and meet with an MD advisor. Readers subscribe for email updates or follow along on social media.

The website has pages for:
• Blog posts
• FAQs and submit new questions
• Terms to understand the pandemic
• Resources - e.g. CDC, fact-checkers, and models
• Ways to help
• Exercise and mental health resources
• Tips for interpreting the news

Social media:
• Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter