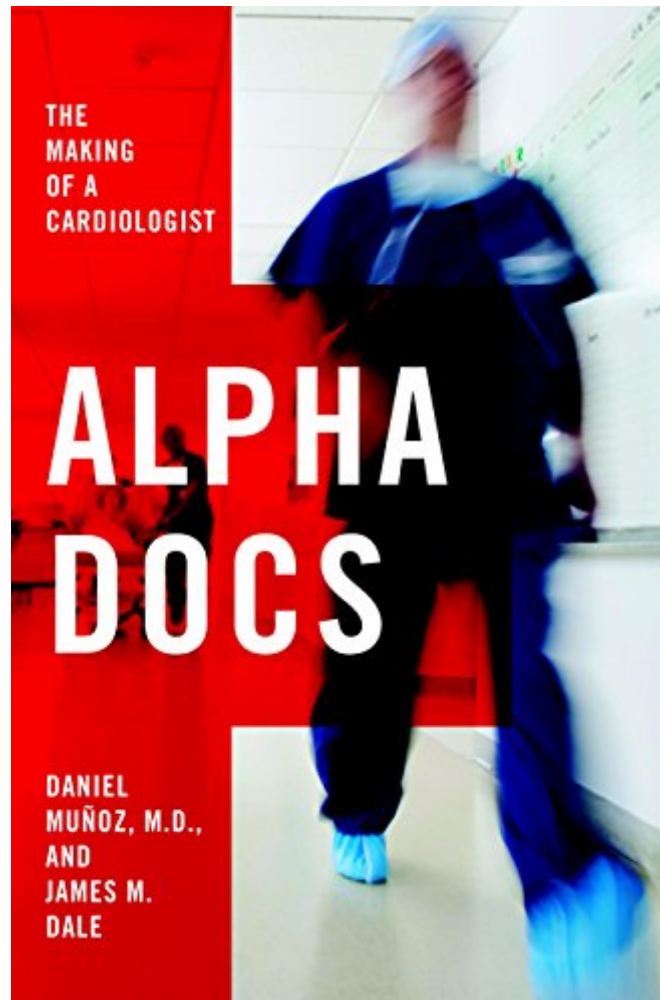




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Alpha Docs: The Making Of A Cardiologist



Synopsis

In the tradition of Scott Turow's *One L* and Atul Gawande's *Better* comes a real-time, real-life chronicle from an impassioned young doctor on the front lines of high-stakes cardiology. It takes drive, persistence, and plenty of stamina to practice cardiology at the highest level. The competition for training fellowship spots is intense. Hundreds of applicants from all over the world compete to be accepted into the Cardiovascular Disease Training Fellowship at Johns Hopkins. Only nine are chosen each year. This is the story of one of those fellows. In *Alpha Docs*, Daniel Muñoz, M.D., recounts his transformation from wide-eyed young medical student to caring, empathetic professional—providing a rare inside look into the day-to-day operations of one of the world's most prestigious medical institutions. The training is arduous and often unforgiving, as Muñoz and his colleagues are schooled by a staff of brilliant and demanding physicians. How they learn the art and science of untangling cardiac mysteries, how they live up to the standards of an iconic institution, how they survive the pressures and relentlessly push themselves to reach the top ranks of American medicine, supplies the beating heart of this gripping narrative. Readers accompany Muñoz as he interacts with his mentors, diagnoses and treats patients, counsels worried family members, and struggles to stay awake for days and nights on end. Lives are saved—and sometimes lost. But the rewards are immediate and the incentives powerful. As Muñoz confides after helping to rescue one man from the throes of a heart attack: "I knew where I wanted to be: not watching but doing, on the side of the glass where I can help shape a patient's fate. I would be a cardiologist."

• A unique yet universal story about striving to be the best in a high-risk, high-impact field, *Alpha Docs* provides fresh perspective on the state of America's healthcare system as it captures all the fulfillment and frustrations of life as a doctor in the twenty-first century. Praise for *Alpha Docs*—
"From the book's beginning, Dr. Daniel Muñoz captivates readers with [the] life-changing story that decided his future. . . . Thoroughly allows readers to understand how cardiologists are made. Highly recommended."
—Medical Library Association
"In simple, compelling prose, *Alpha Docs* captures the reader's attention with gripping case histories, the astonishing breadth and complexity of top-notch medical training, and often wry, sometimes pointed character sketches of the attending physicians."
—Hopkins Medicine magazine
"An insider's view of the high-stakes world of cardiology, *Alpha Docs* offers a vivid and fast-paced exploration of the cauldron that creates doctors in the twenty-first century."
—Danielle Ofri, M.D., Ph.D., author of *What Doctors Feel*—
"[A] heartfelt medical-education memoir . . . a successful portrayal of just how hard it is, intellectually, emotionally, and physically, to train as a physician specialist."
—Booklist—
"This engaging book will interest those considering a career in

medicine as well as readers who want to learn more about cardiology.âLibrary Journal
âMuÃoz begins to find his niche in the medical world, and his journey will inspire doctors in training and patients alike.âPublishers Weeklyâ[A] satisfying immersion into what medical specialization requires . . . There is polish to the patient vignettes, giving them deeply human appeal.âKirkus Reviews

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Customer Reviews

In "Alpha Docs," written with the capable assistance of James Dale, Dr. Daniel MuÃoz takes us to East Baltimore, where he is finishing his residency on the Cardiac Intensive Care Rotation. He is impressed when the CICU team saves the life of a 39-year-old man whose heart is barely pumping. Like rowers operating in perfect synchronization, the team preps the patient; snakes a catheter into his femoral artery; injects a dye; finds the blockage; performs angioplasty to open up the artery; and inserts a stent. These superbly trained professionals accomplish their goal with speed and precision, giving a man who was on the brink of death a second chance. Seeing such skilled

practitioners in action helps Muñoz decide to specialize in cardiology. Only nine individuals are chosen to participate in the elite Johns Hopkins Cardiovascular Disease Training Fellowship Program yearly. One of them is Dr. Muñoz. In "Alpha Docs," Muñoz takes us along on his challenging journey. He learns to communicate with patients and their families lucidly and compassionately; instructs patients to eat sensibly, exercise properly, take their medications as prescribed, and report for their regular checkups; learns the art of reading stress tests and EKGs; performs and evaluates the results of echocardiograms; treats men and women in intensive care; studies the protocol for the recipients of heart transplants; and, in addition, teaches and encourages other young doctors. This terrific work of non-fiction reads like a novel. It is succinct, fast-paced, exciting, and enriched by Muñoz's heartbreaking, enlightening, and occasionally upbeat anecdotes and observations. We discover a great deal about the intricacies of the heart and circulatory system.

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