

Benefits of podcasts for healthcare professionals

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During the recent COVID-19 lockdowns, our normal daily routines changed with many of us discovering new experiences and interests. For me, this was listening to podcasts. Whilst cleaning the bathroom or taking a break from work, podcasts provided a well needed distraction from the pandemic and a connection to the outside world. Through this new exploration, I came across podcasts specifically related to healthcare. By listening to researchers talk about their studies, this brought their work to life for me. I also felt assured that I was using this time efficiently to update my clinical evidence base.

As a nurse, I am acutely aware that healthcare professionals are very busy people and do not always have time to regularly access research to inform their practice. Podcasts can be a quicker, easier way for these individuals to hear about the latest evidence or to be directly signposted to an article of particular interest. I also see how podcasts can promote inclusivity to those who may find it challenging to relate implications from written academic journal articles to their own clinical practice. This got me thinking; so, when I commenced my role as Associate Editor for the Journal of Child Health Care last year, I suggested to the team that podcasts could be recorded to share the excellent work published in the journal. This idea was warmly received, and I now lead on this initiative producing podcasts that complement each issue. Encouragingly, every practitioner I have contacted to be involved with a podcast to talk about their published article has been very keen to engage with the process.

As a digital medium, podcasts have been in existence since the 1980s with their initial use for pre-recorded radio programmes (Hurst, 2019). As technology has developed, podcasts have evolved into their contemporary form as a recorded conversation available via a direct web link or a podcast host such as *Apple*, *Spotify* or *Amazon* (Hurst, 2019). Generally, podcasts are free to access and so can reach large audiences. Podcasts are an ‘on- the-go’, cheap and accessible method of disseminating information; due to this ease of accessibility and the availability of a wide range of topics, the popularity of podcasts continues to increase (Hurst, 2019). Edison Research and Triton Digital (2020) reported that, in the USA alone, 75% of Americans are familiar with podcast technology (212 million people) with 55 million reporting that they had listened to a podcast at least once (an increase of 31 million listeners from 2018).

Podcasts can be effective in enhancing the dissemination of healthcare-based research and knowledge (Casares Jr, 2020). Similar to my venture, health related podcasts can be associated with a journal, but can also be linked to an organisation or be independently produced. Networks exist such as the *Health Podcast Network* (<https://healthpodcastnetwork.com/>) and *Touch Point* (<http://touchpoint.health/>) which have collated various health and medicine related podcasts into one

online location for ease of access. These podcasts can be beneficial to both professionals and patients with effective integration of this digital information for disseminating clinical practice-based topics (Casares Jr and Binkley, 2021).

As well as sharing information, Casares Jr (2020) suggests that podcasts can be used specifically to expand healthcare professionals' evidence-based practice as successfully as reading an academic journal article. As interesting as an article can be to read, listening to the authors speaking about their work enhanced my understanding of their research. One of the latest podcasts discussed a study by clinical pharmacist Guy Van Schandevyl and colleagues (2022) reporting on a simulation education programme for children with cystic fibrosis. Hearing Guy explain the processes and the reactions of the children involved provided clarity and enhanced the meaning of the findings. To test this assertion, read Guy's paper and then listen to the associated podcast. Quintana and Heathers (2021) agree that these 'fireside' discussions (where podcasts compliment research articles) assist with uncovering the nuances of a research study which is not always possible through reading an academic paper alone.

A final thought for this Editorial echoes Clarke et al. (2020), who state that podcasts can help give healthcare professionals a voice and a novel method to share their research with practitioners. I agree as the creation of these podcasts has been beneficial to the authors of the articles and has provided an accessible platform for others to update their evidence base. I am thoroughly enjoying this venture and I hope that this translates to our readers when listening to these inspiring discussions.

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