

## Abstract Form

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**Title of abstract:** Are podcasts an effective way to provide information about cancer?

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### Background:

Digital technologies offer innovative ways to meet the information needs of people affected by cancer, particularly those who may not engage with written materials. In 2017 Cancer Council NSW released Series 1 of The Thing About Cancer information podcast, with Series 2 added in 2018. Episodes feature interviews with cancer experts and survivors about topics such as coping with a diagnosis, making treatment decisions, managing brain fog and nausea, and impacts on carers and family. An evaluation of the podcast was conducted in 2018.

### Aims:

To evaluate how effective information podcasts are in (a) increasing knowledge about cancer-related topics and (b) providing a level of support to people affected by cancer.

### Method:

A self-report pop-up survey was available on the Cancer Council NSW website for 15 weeks. It utilised a 5-point Likert scale to assess quality and effectiveness. It also measured frequency of listening; amount listened to; how listeners found out about the podcasts; and if they told others about the podcasts or took further actions. SoundCloud analytics quantified overall listens.

### Results:

During the study period, 1,041 people listened via the website, with a further 4,441 through apps on smartphones and other devices. Surveys were completed by 29 website listeners, including people diagnosed with cancer (31%); carers (24%); and family/friends (24%). Most were female (79%) and aged 40-69 years (88%).

The evaluation of website listens found the podcasts:

- increased knowledge about cancer (85%) and where to find help (95%)
- provided strategies for managing side effects and lifestyle changes (91%)
- helped listeners feel supported knowing others had been through similar experiences (100%).

**Implications that impact on your project:**

The evaluation found The Thing About Cancer podcasts: are credible, informative and easy to understand; increase knowledge; prompt help-seeking; normalise the cancer experience; and reduce feelings of isolation. Podcasts offer convenience, allowing individuals to listen at a time and place that suits them. Furthermore, this medium may be a useful way to provide reliable information to groups who face barriers accessing written resources, including those with low literacy. However, more research is required to understand whether these groups are able to easily search for and access podcasts.