

Intensifying health education practices in primary care through the use of podcasts

Abstract

Objective: To describe the experience of using podcasts as a tool for health promotion and education, replicated in the context of primary care. **Method:** An experience report by teachers and students from a Federal Institution in the south of Minas Gerais, using Information and Communication Technologies for health promotion actions for the population in 2022. **Results and Discussion:** Of the content produced and disseminated on Instagram, the reach was 6476 views, on Facebook 3956 and on Spotify 1169. Through the podcast, it became possible to achieve a wide reach, including those who have limited access to other forms of health education. Its ability to reach a greater number of people can facilitate communication between health professionals and patients, making it a valuable addition to the arsenal of resources available in primary health care. **Conclusion:** The students were able to develop health education activities that differ from the traditional model, in addition to obtaining fundamental knowledge for the implementation of comprehensive care, mediated by virtual technologies and the population had access to information without the need to travel to health units.

Keywords: primary health care, health education, health promotion, health information technology

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Introduction

Health education manifests itself as a collaborative process involving guidance from health professionals to individuals, aimed at promoting the development of skills and behaviors aimed at improving health outcomes.¹ Through this approach, patient education can have a direct impact on their behavioral patterns, by stimulating changes in the aspects of knowledge, attitude and skills that are essential for improving their health condition.² In this scenario, the active participation of the individual in the educational process, through pedagogical and andragogical approaches, is emerging as a fundamental tool in the management of health conditions. However, the strategies implemented to date have not achieved the necessary effectiveness.³ Thus, as the world continues to evolve, the demand for accessible and engaging health education has become increasingly vital. Researchers have recognized the need to explore innovative approaches that can effectively reach diverse populations and promote positive health outcomes.⁴ The adoption of strategies aimed at engaging the patient, promoting a deep understanding of the health-disease relationship and facilitating the practical application of the knowledge acquired, is a promising approach in this educational context.⁵ It also highlights the urgent importance of rethinking conventional educational approaches, since traditional methods have shown limitations in meeting contemporary demands.⁶

The COVID-19 pandemic and the need for social isolation to contain the spread of the virus has required health professionals to adapt their ways of working to preserve health promotion actions, and nursing practices mediated by Information and Communication Technology have been regulated through Resolution No. 696/2022 of the Federal Nursing Council.⁷ Digital forms such as videos and podcasts are increasingly being explored as tools for narrative communication and health education for adults and the elderly.⁸ By involving individuals in stories, these resources facilitate the processing of information and the overcoming of behavioral obstacles.⁹ According to Fisher's

theory, studies show that sharing information through narratives engages participants more deeply, promoting positive attitudes, increasing knowledge and strengthening the behavioral intention to adopt healthy changes.¹⁰ Narratives are especially effective in evoking intense emotional responses, increasing the patient's listening capacity and improving information retention.¹¹ In this context, one such technology that has attracted significant attention in recent years is the use of podcasts as a health education tool, as it is a versatile and dynamic instrument for sharing health information and bringing professionals closer to the community, improving their care. The aim of this study was to describe the experience of using podcasts as health promotion and education tools, replicated in the context of primary care.

Method

This is an experience report on the use of podcasts as health promotion and education tools, replicated in the context of primary health care. The materials were produced by students from a Federal Institution in the south of Minas Gerais, during emergency remote teaching, mediated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), in the first semester of 2022, during the pandemic caused by COVID-19. ICTs are innovative techniques that can optimize health services by enabling some actions to be carried out remotely, including disease prevention and health promotion actions, strengthening the activities proposed by primary care and having a positive impact on the population's quality of life. The materials were produced using free digital platforms, under the guidance of teachers linked to the institution. In order to produce the materials, the students were trained by specialists in journalism and design and graphic arts in podcast editing and production. Thus, the tools were developed in five stages, namely: 1) Problematization and definition of the generating theme for the podcasts: defined among the students, as follows: Generating theme a) Maternal and Child Health: The impact of the pandemic on pregnancy. b) Health Promotion: Mental Health in times of

social isolation. c) Health Education: Health education practices for adolescents in times of COVID-19. d) Urgency and Emergency: Exogenous intoxication in childhood: first aid and prophylaxis. 2) search in the scientific literature (PubMed/Medline, Scopus and Web of Science) for relevant content for the development of the material; 3) preparation of a script containing an introduction to the topic and guiding questions for conducting the podcasts; 4) Definition of the podcast approach (interview, chat, narrative). To build the tools, synchronous meetings were held between the thematic groups using the Google Meet platform. After the materials were produced, they were disseminated on Spotify, through the Audacity program, on the

Facebook and Instagram platforms, and then sent to nurses who work in primary care to replicate the content.

Results

In order to share information with as many people as possible and promote health education practices in an accelerated manner, communication channels frequently accessed by the population were used, such as Instagram, Facebook and Spotify. It was not possible to measure the number of replications made by the nurses, but through the virtual tools in which the materials were disseminated, the reach of each podcast can be measured, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Number of views of podcasts according to the different generating themes, according to Instagram, Facebook and Spotify.

Generating theme	Number of views achieved		
	Instagram	Facebook	Spotify
Maternal and Child: The impact of pandemic in pregnancy	893	978	275
Health Promotion: Mental Health in times of social isolation	1578	857	279
Health Education: Health education practices for teenagers in times of COVID-19	2549	1124	356
Urgency and Emergency: Exogenous poisoning in childhood: first aid and prophylaxis	1456	997	259
Total number of views	6476	3956	1169

Discussion

Health education actions can encourage people to rethink their behavior and habits and, based on the knowledge acquired, adopt healthier lifestyles. The use of podcasts in primary health care represents an innovative and multifaceted approach, whose importance transcends the mere transmission of information.¹² Podcasts, as an educational tool, play a crucial role in promoting health and strengthening primary health care. According to our data, we can see that in total, on the Instagram page we reached 6476 views, on Facebook 3956 views, and on Spotify 1169, through the podcast, it becomes possible to reach a wide audience, including those who have limited access to other forms of health education. This is especially relevant in contexts where access to information is restricted or where geographical barriers prevent access to traditional health services. In this way, podcasts can reach remote or marginalized communities, providing them with access to vital information on disease prevention, health promotion and self-care.¹³

In addition, podcasts have the potential to increase the effectiveness of communication between healthcare professionals and patients. By adopting a personalized and accessible approach, these tools can facilitate the health education process, enabling a deeper understanding of health concepts, thus strengthening patients' ability to make informed decisions about their own health.¹⁴ This is especially relevant in promoting healthy lifestyles and managing chronic conditions, where active patient engagement plays a key role in the success of treatment.¹³ In this sense, at the first level of health care, the use of podcasts can also help as training strategies for professionals working in the services.¹⁵ By offering access to educational and up-to-date content, podcasts can contribute to the continuous professional development of nurses, nursing technicians and other members of the multidisciplinary team, keeping them informed about the latest evidence and recommended practices for quality care that fully meets the needs of the people in their respective areas of coverage. This can lead to an improvement in the quality of the health services provided, as well as greater job satisfaction on the part of health professionals.¹⁶

To this end, podcasts represent a versatile and powerful tool for promoting health and strengthening primary health care. Their ability

to reach a wide and diverse audience, facilitate communication between health professionals and patients, and provide continuing education for health professionals, makes them a valuable addition to the arsenal of resources available in primary health care.¹⁷ By offering an accessible and engaging format, podcasts allow healthcare professionals to share information in a clear and objective way and offer the flexibility of being accessed anytime and anywhere, allowing listeners to learn at their own pace and convenience.^{18,19} This is especially relevant in a digital age, where technology plays a central role in people's daily lives.¹⁹ By incorporating podcasts into their educational practices, PHC professionals who develop educational actions can maximize their impact on health promotion and strengthening primary care, enabling individuals to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. For the teachers, as well as teaching, they had to learn new teaching models and adapt to the pandemic scenario, prioritizing the quality of the teaching-learning process. As far as the students are concerned, preparing these tools was a challenge, due to the lack of prior knowledge for preparing the materials. However, it helped positively in the students' training process, making them transforming agents and protagonists of the teaching-learning process.

Conclusion

The use of podcasts has benefited both users of health units and professionals working in the field. It should also be noted that the construction of these tools by students helped to minimize the impact of the pandemic scenario, which required social isolation and the suspension of practical activities carried out by health courses. By building these tools, the students were able to develop health education activities that differed from the traditional model implemented in basic units, as well as gaining fundamental knowledge for implementing comprehensive care, mediated by virtual technologies. These, when used properly, can be essential for strengthening the health education process and encouraging adherence to practices aimed at minimizing health problems. Based on this experience, it is believed that the use of ICTs has enriched the health promotion actions carried out in this context and can be incorporated into health services in a planned and routine way, bringing them closer to comprehensive care, as provided for by the SUS (Unified Health System).

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflicts of interest

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