

BACKGROUND

The profession of occupational therapy is often unknown or misunderstood by medical professionals or civilians alike. Many individuals do not know what OT does or why.

Podcasting Background Info:

- In 2020, 37% of the U.S. population, around 104 million people, reported listening to a podcast in the last month. In 2018, it was 26%.
- In 2020, 24% of the U.S. population, around 68 million people, reported listening to podcasts weekly. In 2018, it was 17%.
- Estimated 155 million people in the U.S. report ever listening to a podcast as of 2020.
- The average listener of podcasts listens to roughly 6.5 hours of podcasts per week in 2020.
- Monthly listeners of podcasts crested 100 million people in the U.S. for the first time in 2020.
- The weekly podcast listener in the U.S. averages 6 per week in 2020.
- Currently there are over 900,000 podcasts globally. Roughly 17 are OT-based.

The prevalence, utilization, and popularity of podcasting is rapidly increasing. Podcasts are being used as tools to spread information through educating and entertaining millions of listeners a day. Occupational therapy has a scarce presence in this electronic medium and is possibly underutilizing its potential.

I looked into the use of a podcast as a tool to educate others on what OT does and why when addressing 5 major patient psychosocial aspects across practice settings could be a viable and scalable method to advocate for the profession.

VISIT: [ChasingOT.com](https://www.chasingot.com) for links to podcast episodes and additional information on the psychosocial research portion of the project.

FOCUSED QUESTION

Is podcasting an effective method to change perceptions of and advocate for the profession of occupational therapy by educating others on the interventions and impact OT's have on patient psychosocial factors across settings?

METHODS

This is a mixed methods study using qualitative data from interviews with licensed OT's and quantitative data collected from online surveys. The process of data collection and analysis is below:

- 1) Online survey sent out to collect baseline data on peoples' perceptions of occupational therapy.
- 2) Interviews with 14 licensed OT's across 6 different practice settings at Denver Health and Hospital Authority were conducted.
- 3) Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for common themes relating to patient psychosocial factors.
- 4) The top 5 psychosocial themes across settings that OT's impact were identified, and subthemes were created.
- 5) Research into the 5 major psychosocial themes was conducted.
- 6) Five podcast episodes that focused around each major psychosocial theme were completed and made available to the public.
- 7) A post-podcast survey was made available online for people to take after listening to a podcast episode.
- 8) Data from the pre- and post-podcast surveys will be analyzed to look for any measurable changes in others' perception of occupational therapy.
- 9) Results looking at peoples' possible changes in perceptions about OT and their satisfaction with the podcast will be used to determine overall feasibility and scalability of using a podcast as an advocacy tool for the profession of occupational therapy.



RESULTS

Identified Psychosocial Themes and Subthemes:

- 1) Communication
 - i) Desire to communicate
 - ii) Types of communication
 - iii) Communication barriers
- 2) Support Systems
 - i) Desire for a support system
 - ii) Impacts of a support system
 - iii) Types of support systems
- 3) Group Inclusion
 - i) Desire to be part of a group
 - ii) Impacts/aspects of being part of a group
 - iii) Types of groups
- 4) Control
 - i) Desire for control
 - ii) Self-expression and advocacy
- 5) Social Interactions
 - i) Desire to interact with others
 - ii) Outcomes of socializing
 - iii) Types of social interactions

Quantitative Survey Results: 18 Total Responses

- 1) Level of OT knowledge on scale of 1-10: BEFORE podcast = 44.4% were between 8-10. AFTER podcast = 88.9% were between 8-10.
- 2) Do OT's address PsySo factors in treatment? 88.9% said YES.
- 3) More willing to work with OT in future AFTER podcast? 94.4% said YES
- 4) Level of podcast enjoyment/satisfaction from 1-10: 88.9% were between 9-10.
- 5) Did the podcast change your perception of OT? 83.3% said YES, IN A POSITIVE MANNER.
- 6) Are you more informed about OT role with patient PsySo factors after podcast? 88.9% said YES
- 7) Only 5.6% of respondents worked for DHHA.
- 8) Of respondents, 33.3% were OT's or OTS's

BOTTOM LINE FOR OT

Occupational therapists play a significant role in addressing and improving patient psychosocial factors through the recovery process and across practice settings. The current scholarly literature supports this statement. However, many healthcare practitioners and civilians are unaware of the role OT's play in addressing these aspects as well as the methods used to intervene.

By using the rapidly growing technology-based medium of podcasting, information about the psychosocial factors that OT's impact and the ways they accomplish this can be widely and easily distributed to global populations. This improved understanding of OT can act as a way to advocate for the profession to civilians or healthcare providers alike.

OT's adapt their methods of intervention based on the environment, and the current technological and social environment is favoring podcasts as a way to learn new information and be entertained. Adapting the strategies used to advocate for occupational therapy based on the current climate of communication is necessary in order to stay relevant and professionally visible.

Based on the survey results, the majority of listeners are not OT's/OTS's and do not work for DHHA. The podcast served as an effective tool to increase the level of overall knowledge of OT, and specifically knowledge of OT's role in addressing patient PsySo factors. All but 1 response agreed they are more willing to work with OT's in the future, which can lead to an increase in OT referrals in the future. People also reported enjoying the podcast format as a way to learn about OT. The majority of people did not work at Denver Health and Hospital Authority, so it is unclear if this format is effective on a targeted small scale for a specific site. The responses do indicate that it may be an effective method to use in the U.S.A. and Canada with the general public. Only 18 responses were recorded, so the statistical significance of the data are weak, but still point to a trend that podcasting is a worthy medium to use as an advocacy tool for occupational therapy as a whole and for specific aspects of the profession.

REFERENCES

References:

- Edison Research and Triton Digital (2019) *The infinite dial 2019*.
<https://www.edisonresearch.com/the-infinite-dial-2019/>
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