

Podcasts on the 99 priority topics for family medicine residents

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The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) provides family medicine residents with a list of 99 priority topics and associated specific objectives to help prepare them for CFPC Certification examinations (ie, short-answer management problems and simulated office orals).¹

A 2013 reflection by a family medicine preceptor supports the notion that the CFPC examination is of high calibre and demands an active learning approach.² Although residents have access to traditional examination preparation resources,³ there are currently no CFPC-endorsed audio podcasts available—which was a topic of discussion at a CFPC Section of Residents meeting in 2015. However, a number of relevant family medicine podcasts do exist in Canada, each with a different style and goal. Recently, Dr Brady Bouchard and his team started a podcast series called *99 Topics for the CCFP (99topics.drbrbouchard.ca)*, with the specific goal of efficiently and effectively covering the examination objectives.

Audio podcasts have been well received in North America⁴⁻⁶ and are deemed an efficient way to learn and keep up to date while in various daily-life settings.^{7,8} However, quality indicators are needed for such resources,⁹ particularly around credibility, content, and design.¹⁰ Furthermore, the evidence is lacking on how podcasts should be designed to optimize learning effectiveness.¹¹


Other countries with family practice education comparable to ours (eg, the United Kingdom,¹² Australia,¹³ and the United States¹⁴) have podcast series that are endorsed by their regulating bodies. Communication with the CFPC suggests that peer review by more than 1 physician and availability in both English and French could open the doors for CFPC endorsement of Canadian podcasts.

Based on a recent survey, a substantial number of family medicine residents in Canada would appreciate a podcast series addressing the 99 topics for CFPC Certification (R.A.O. and F.S., unpublished data, 2016). If a podcast were produced, residents would have high expectations for both the content and the technical quality. Podcasts should be concise (between 10 and 30 minutes long) and case based, and should also cover national guidelines and address the 99 topic objectives. High-yield topics should be addressed first. **Table 1** summarizes recommendations for podcast designers based on

Table 1. Recommendations for podcast designers when creating podcasts for the 99 family medicine topics

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION
Timing	Release the podcast several months before the examination, possibly in line with a proposed study plan
Duration	Try to keep the duration of podcast episodes to 15 min (which is considered the "sweet spot" duration for podcast episodes)
Presentation	Present podcasts in a "smooth-flowing" manner and provide up-to-date and relevant content (including guidelines) in either a casual or a formal style
Hosts	Include presenters who are easy to understand (fluent in English or French and articulate); presenters should be concise and engaging (should not be monotonous or have high-pitched voices), and abstain from unnecessary dialogue
Technical design	Ensure the sound pattern is consistent between episodes and matches the host's presenting style; optimize sound recording, paying particular attention to consistent volumes, absence of background noise, and appropriate preamplification volume settings
Content design	Use a case-based approach with a concise summary of current guidelines pertinent to the key features of the 99 topics
Study notes	Provide study notes alongside the episodes and links to other resources (such as guidelines), if applicable
Preferred topics	Address the most challenging topics first, such as chronic diseases (eg, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pain management, dyslipidemia, and congestive heart failure), dementia, abdominal pain, and skin disorders
Language	Produce the podcast in both English and French
Technology ideas	Link the podcast to an app that contains relevant questions and video links
Other	Provide general examination tips and tricks. Seek endorsement from the College of Family Physicians of Canada

the results of the survey (R.A.O. and F.S., unpublished data, 2016).

There are opportunities for the CFPC to identify current examination preparation needs of Canadian family medicine residents by asking the question as part of an ongoing communication strategy and needs assessment. This in turn could allow for a more targeted development of resources, potentially making use of current technology where appropriate. 

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Competing interests

None declared

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