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Podcasting



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The Story Behind Critical Care Practitioner

Podcasts are audio files made available regularly to occasional listeners or subscribers (usually a free subscription). The 'pod' in the name comes from iPod, and although that device is no longer manufactured, podcasting goes from strength to strength. Listening to a podcast is as simple as clicking a link on a website, or subscribing via an Apple or Android app on to a smartphone or a tablet. You can then access a podcast when you like, either by downloading an episode on to your device or listening when you have an internet connection.

Podcasting is an ideal way to keep up-to-date in critical care and emergency medicine. Podcasts are just one part of the FOAMed free open access medical education and FOANed free open access nursing education movements, which have gathered together resources from around the world for the benefit of fellow practitioners.

ICU Management & Practice spoke to Jonathan Downham, who runs the website criticalcarepractitioner.co.uk, about the motivation behind the website and the practicalities of podcasting. Jonathan is an Advanced Clinical Practitioner in Emergency Medicine at Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham in the UK, who has also worked as an Advanced Clinical Practitioner in Critical Care. He teaches on the Masters-level Clinical Examination course at the University of Warwick, and established a degree level clinical examination course at the University of Staffordshire.

In a nutshell, what is Critical Care Practitioner?

It's a website I started around two years ago when I was qualifying as a critical care practitioner. It is a mixture of blog posts and podcasts about critical care. I have always been into 'gadgets' and 'geekery', so I set up the website to share what I was learning with others. It started as a way of helping other people learn while I was learning, but it has grown and is designed as a resource for critical care and emergency medicine practitioners.

When I first started I approached fellow practitioners on Twitter. Twitter folk are very forthcoming on helping people out. I ping people and mostly they are very happy to talk to me. It's a very nice community to be part of – we're like a family.

I've had good feedback from both experienced staff and from learners. Footfall is gradually increasing, and it increased noticeably when I moved to my role in the emergency medicine department, while retaining a foot in the intensive care camp as well.

Who's your audience?

The website is aimed at critical care and emergency medicine practitioners. One of the drawbacks to podcasting is that the audience isn't very interactive. From the stats I get from the company that hosts the audio files, I know that 80% of my audience are in the U.S., of which 60% are in California, for some reason. With the website, again most of the audience is American. They have taken up the technology of podcasting more than we have in the UK.

What's the critical care practitioner role in the UK?

The critical care practitioner role is relatively new in the UK. Before the critical practitioner role was introduced, a nurse in intensive care could get as far as senior sister level, then go either into education or management. There was not the opportunity to go further in a clinical role. Due to Modernising Medical Careers (specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk) and the European working time directive, the junior doctors coming through intensive care spend 4-6 months maximum in the ICU before rotating elsewhere. That created problems as there was no consistency amongst the junior workforce and there were also gaps to fill, hence the decision to train senior nursing staff up to master's degree level with various other technical skills to enable them to work alongside the junior medical staff and be part of the the medical rotation, taking on a lot of the tasks that the doctors used to do. It's been successful since it started in Devon around 7 years ago. My hospital was one of the early sites to do it. More and more centres are employing critical care practitioners. The advanced practitioner role is not just in critical care, it's in A&E, surgery, medicine, elderly care, frailty and so on. It's a role that's definitely here to stay.

What equipment do you use for Podcasting?

It cost me next to nothing to set up. You only need a computer with a microphone, a program to edit the sound files (I use Audacity, a free program) and iTunes. There is a cost for hosting sound files. If you host the sound files with your web company, it takes a lot of space on their servers, which is not ideal. So I pay a small fee to a company that hosts the sound files.

What has been your most popular podcast?

- One I did with Ollie Poole, a respiratory therapist in Canada. He does a series on YouTube (<https://iii.hm/35i>) where he talks to people about the way we can do mechanical ventilation, the various settings. We've produced three podcasts together on a similar vein: *CCP Podcast 018: Mechanical Ventilation* (<https://iii.hm/35i>); *CCP Podcast 024: Mechanical Ventilation...the basics* (<https://iii.hm/35k>) & *CCP Podcast 034: Mechanical Ventilation... Types of breath* (<https://iii.hm/35l>).

What medical podcasts do you listen to yourself?

- *EMBasic: Your Boot Camp Guide to Emergency Medicine* - Steve Carroll (embasic.org). I like his style, because he presents information in a structured way.
- *EMCrit* - Scott Weingart (emcrit.org). Scott is well known in the podcasting world.
- *Pre-hospital emergency medicine* - Minh Le Cong (prehospitalmed.com/category/prehospitalpodcast). Minh is a flying doctor in Australia. I interviewed him for one of my podcasts, *CCP Podcast 010: Cricoid Pressure: Do it? Do it right? Or don't do it at all?* (criticalcarepractitioner.co.uk/ccppodcast-010-cricoid-pressure-do-it-doit-right-or-dont-do-it-at-all).

If our readers haven't listened to a podcast yet, where should they start?

- I don't recommend medical ones to start with. I suggest the first series of *Serial* (serialpodcast.org/season-one).

Further Information

- Subscribe to Critical Care Practitioner podcasts at:
 - iTunes - (<https://iii.hm/35m>)
 - Android – via the Stitcher app (<https://iii.hm/35n>)
- Subscribe to Critical Care Practitioner updates at criticalcarepractitioner.co.uk
- How to get a Podcast? serialpodcast.org/how-to-listen
- Audacity audacityteam.org

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