



PODCASTS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Summary of Survey Findings

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About the Study

This research aimed to understand the behaviours, attitudes and preferences of podcast listeners regarding different types of podcasts, including podcasts on the topic of mental health. It also aimed to understand the relationship between listening to podcasts and different aspects of mental health.

This study is part of an ongoing PhD Study that is a collaboration between The University of Melbourne and the Anne Deveson Research Centre, an initiative of SANE Australia.

Method

This study involved a 10-20 minute online survey in early 2021.

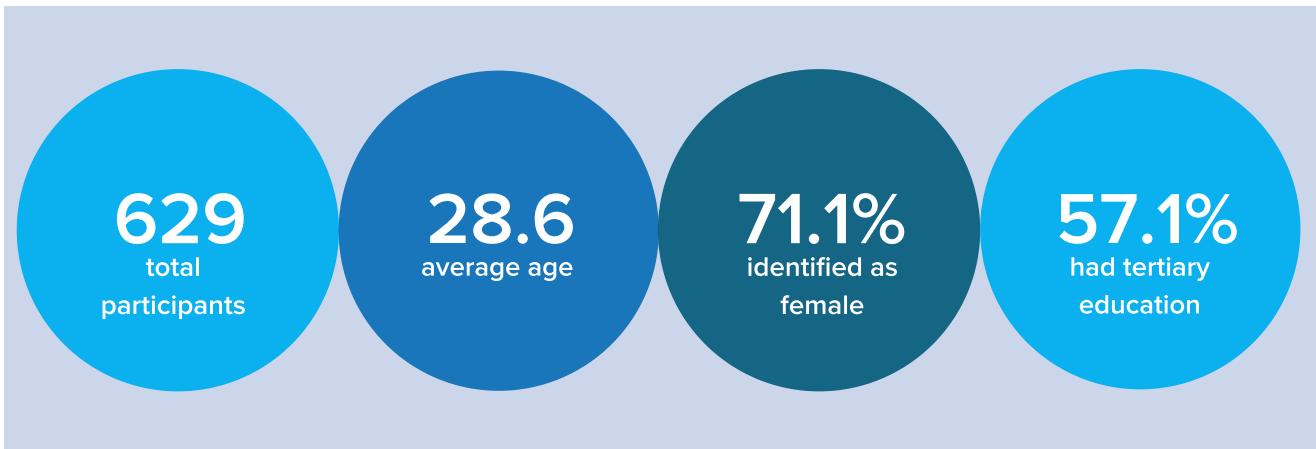
All participants were located in Australia, aged 18 or older and had listened to a podcast in the last 12 months, on any topic.

Participants were asked a range of questions including:

- Demographics such as age, gender, and education
- Experiences listening to different types of podcasts
- Motivations regarding mental health-themed podcasts
- Questionnaires on topics such as degree of stigmatising attitudes towards mental health issues, knowledge of mental health, and internalised stigma.

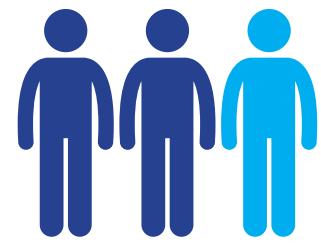
Who participated?

We surveyed a range of podcast listeners:



General podcast listening

We learnt about the types of podcasts participants listened to in the last 12 months:



34% had listened to a mental health-themed podcast

Most popular genres:



Society & Culture



Comedy



True Crime

We learnt about participants' general podcast listening habits:

- Most participants (62%) listened to at least 4 podcast episodes in the last month
- Most participants (61%) listened to 1-3 individual podcast series in the last month
- Most participants (93%) listened to most of a podcast episode, or all of an episode, in general
- Participants generally discovered new podcasts through word of mouth (59%), social media (54%), or through other podcasts (51%)

Mental health-themed podcasts

In total, 216 (34.3%) participants had listened to a mental health-themed podcast in the last 12 months.

These participants reported a range of types of mental health-themed podcasts they listened to, most commonly:

- *Interviews with people with lived experience*
- *Mindfulness/relaxation/meditation*
- *Strategies for coping with mental health issues*

To stay engaged during the podcast, personally I enjoy when a person shares their story and becomes emotionally connected with the listener.

Written survey response

These participants reported a wide range of reasons why they had listened to mental health-themed podcasts. The most common are below.



We also explored some differences between people who had listened to mental health-themed podcasts, and those who hadn't.

We found statistically significant relationships between listening to a mental health-themed podcast and:

- Having lived experience of mental health issues
- Being older
- Having lower levels of stigmatising attitudes towards people living with mental health issues
- Having higher levels of knowledge around mental health issues



Conclusions

This is the first known study to report on the demographics, behaviours, motivations and attitudes of people who listen to mental health-themed podcasts.

The findings highlight the ways that mental health-themed podcasts can potentially impact upon listeners. They may increase knowledge and reduce stigma around mental health. Or, people who have more knowledge and fewer stigmatising beliefs may be interested in these podcasts in the first place. More research is needed to explore these relationships.

Next steps

The findings from this survey will directly inform the next steps of the PhD study, which involves designing, producing and evaluating a new mental health-themed podcast.

We are also preparing a publication for a peer-reviewed journal. This publication will present the survey findings, and data analysis, in more detail.

Acknowledgements

The study team wish to give heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in this study.

More information

For more information about the study, please contact PhD Candidate Elise Carrotte through elise.carrotte@student.unimelb.edu.au