Harnessing Podcasts to Maximize the Reach of Medical Publications

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Podcasts provide an opportunity for publishers and authors to reach busy clinicians in a format that is convenient and engaging. For clinicians, podcasts are an effective educational tool that can facilitate keeping up-to-date with the most recent data in the field.

Background

- Podcasts are a convenient, efficient way to keep up-to-date with new medical information provided from a diversity of experts[1,2]
- Residents and staff physicians across fields of expertise increasingly listen to podcasts to keep up-to-date with medical information[1-5]
- Podcasts provide an opportunity to increase the uptake and extend the reach of medical publications[2,5-7]

Objective

- To review podcast offerings by medical journals across diverse therapeutic areas (TAs) and provide insights and recommendations for the effective integration of podcasts into medical publications
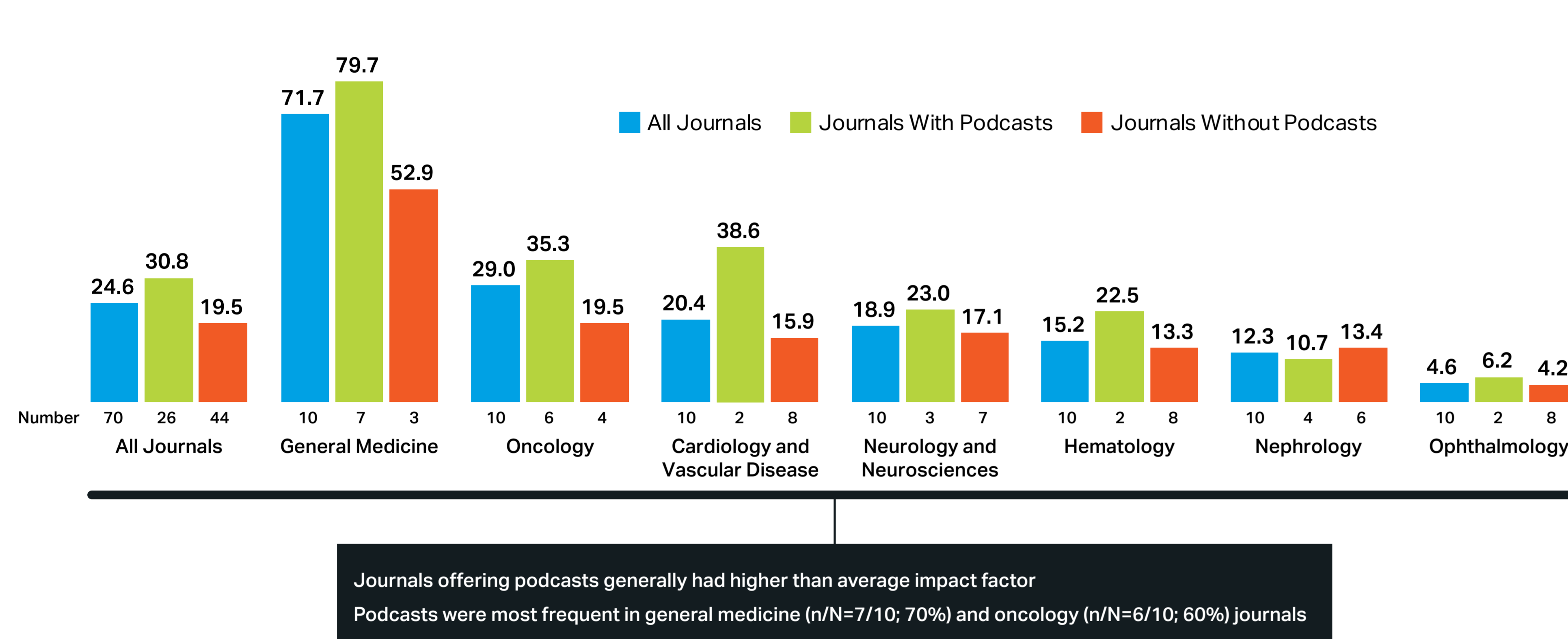
Methods

- Sylogent was used to identify journals across 7 TAs, filtering for "peer reviewed," "original research," and "clinical"
- Podcast offerings and details in 10 journals from each TA with the highest impact factors were reviewed (N=70)
- Journals in multiple TA categories were assigned to 1 TA to avoid duplication
- Descriptive statistics were used to analyze identified podcast offerings

Conclusions

- Findings indicate there is a correlation between journals offering podcasts and impact factor, suggesting embracing podcasts may be a way to increase journal reach and visibility
- Podcast creation is primarily journal driven and varies in format, frequency, and duration, but most included author guests, which suggests including author voices is important for engaging listeners
- Most podcasts were audio only, implying that focusing on high-quality, audio-only content simplifies production and enhances accessibility, while leaving open the possibility for transcripts, visuals, or other multimedia content at a later date
- The limited availability of podcast metrics is a challenge for assessing the uptake of podcasts and associated articles
- Maintaining a podcast's duration between 15 and 30 minutes can help maintain listener attention and cater to busy lifestyles
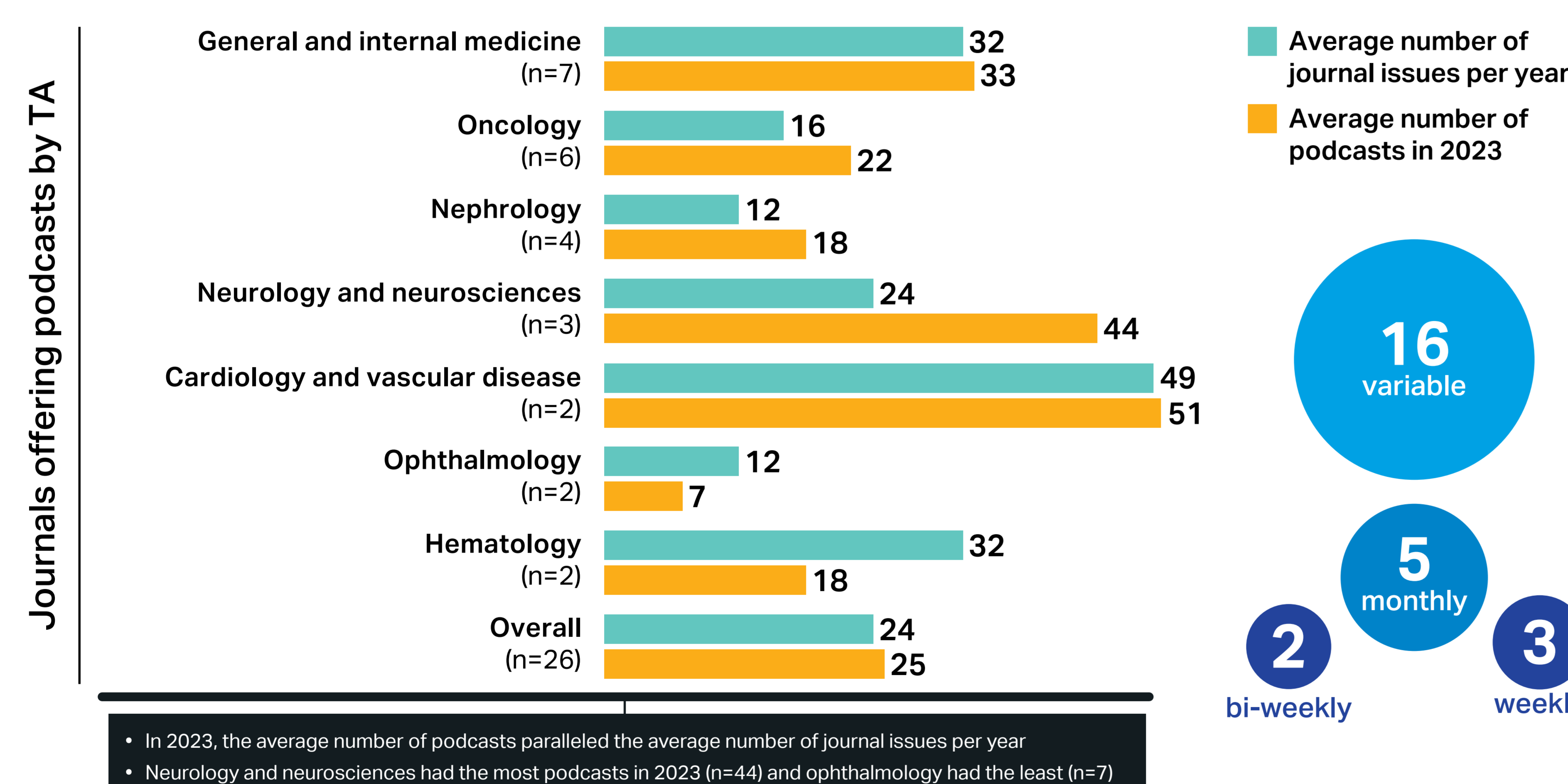
Results

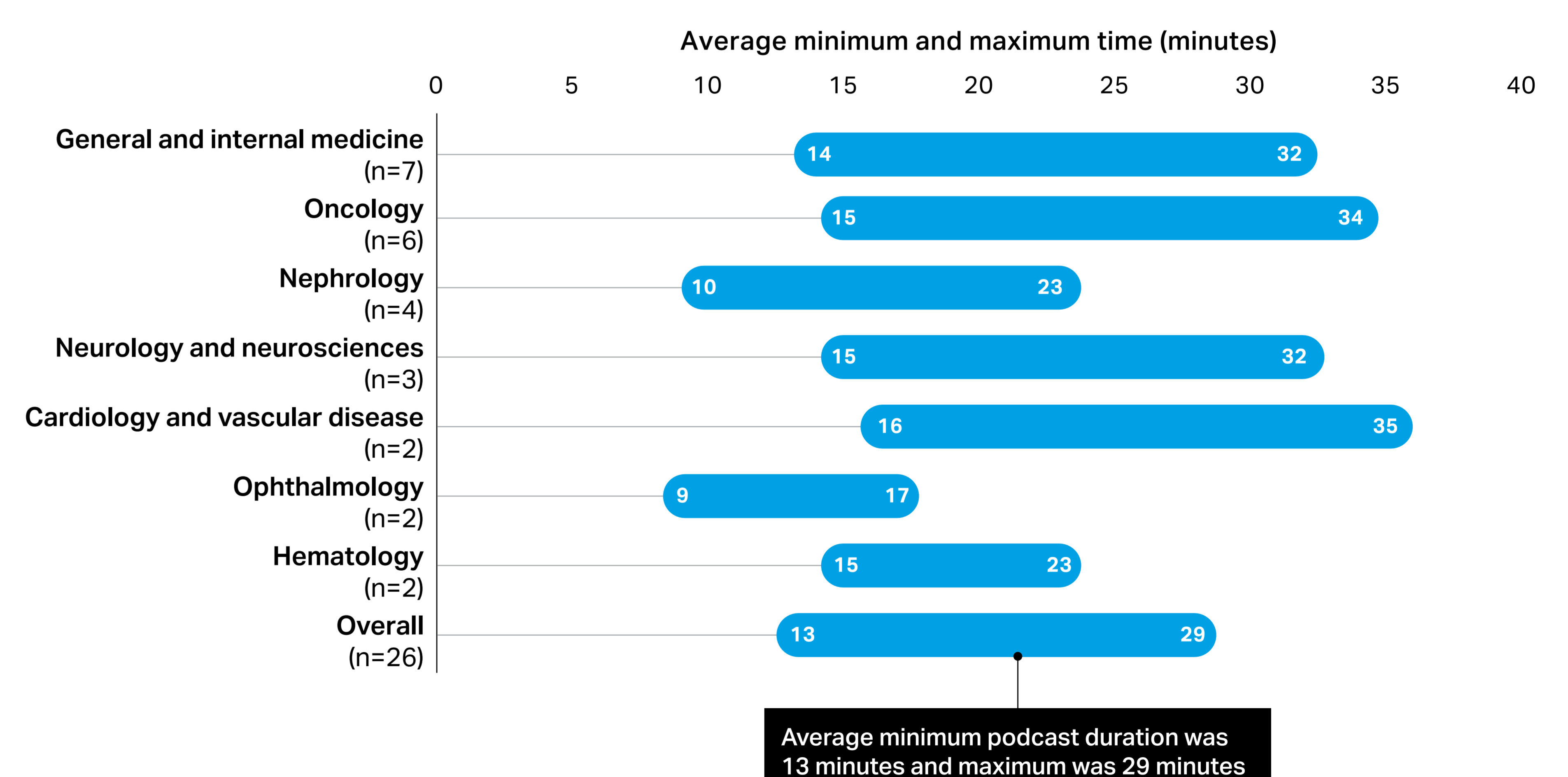### Average Impact Factor in Journals With and Without Podcasts

Legend: All Journals, Journals With Podcasts, Journals Without Podcasts

	All Journals	General Medicine	Oncology	Cardiology and Vascular Disease	Neurology and Neurosciences	Hematology	Nephrology	Ophthalmology
All Journals	24.6	71.7	29.0	20.4	18.9	15.2	12.3	4.6
Journals With Podcasts	30.8	79.7	35.3	38.6	23.0	22.5	10.7	6.2
Journals Without Podcasts	19.5	52.9	19.5	15.9	17.1	13.3	13.4	4.2
Number	70 / 26 / 44	10 / 7 / 3	10 / 6 / 4	10 / 2 / 8	10 / 3 / 7	10 / 2 / 8	10 / 4 / 6	10 / 2 / 8

Journals offering podcasts generally had higher than average impact factor
Podcasts were most frequent in general medicine (n/N=7/10; 70%) and oncology (n/N=6/10; 60%) journals

Characterization of Journal Podcasts

70 journals

- Had podcasts — 26
- Journal initiated podcasts — 26
- Audio-only podcasts* — 25
- Podcasts hosted on the journal site† — 24
- Podcast metrics available — 3

Podcast Format (N=26)
- Interview — 11
- Discussion — 9
- Variable — 4
- Summary — 2

Supporting Information (N=26)
- No additional information — 12
- Description — 11
- Summary — 1
- Transcript — 2

[†]1 podcast was both audio and video. [*]2 podcasts were hosted on soundcloud.

18 podcasts included author guests

Most podcasts contained no or minimal additional information

Number and Frequency of Journal Podcasts

Journals offering podcasts by TA

Legend: Average number of journal issues per year; Average number of podcasts in 2023

TA	Avg journal issues/year	Avg podcasts in 2023
General and internal medicine (n=7)	32	33
Oncology (n=6)	16	22
Nephrology (n=4)	12	18
Neurology and neurosciences (n=3)	24	44
Cardiology and vascular disease (n=2)	49	51
Ophthalmology (n=2)	12	7
Hematology (n=2)	32	18
Overall (n=26)	24	25

- 16 variable
- 5 monthly
- 2 bi-weekly
- 3 weekly

- In 2023, the average number of podcasts paralleled the average number of journal issues per year
- Neurology and neurosciences had the most podcasts in 2023 (n=44) and ophthalmology had the least (n=7)

Average Minimum and Maximum Podcast Duration

Average minimum and maximum time (minutes)

TA	Minimum	Maximum
General and internal medicine (n=7)	14	32
Oncology (n=6)	15	34
Nephrology (n=4)	10	23
Neurology and neurosciences (n=3)	15	32
Cardiology and vascular disease (n=2)	16	35
Ophthalmology (n=2)	9	17
Hematology (n=2)	15	23
Overall (n=26)	13	29

Average minimum podcast duration was 13 minutes and maximum was 29 minutes

Recommendations

Accessibility

- Include transcripts, summaries, or multimedia elements like visuals to enhance accessibility of podcasts
- Refine search engine optimization strategies to effectively target audiences and enhance online visibility
- Bolster accessibility by elevating podcast visibility on journal and article web pages

Engagement

- Consider short, "bite-sized" modules (≤5 min) to focus on specific aspects of the podcast, enhancing convenience for busy individuals
- Collaborate with podcast networks, key science communicators, and/or digital/key opinion leaders to enhance reach of podcast
- Foster audience interaction opportunities such as a Q&A or comment section to create opportunities to engage the audience and prolong interest in the topic
- Publishers/journals could implement peer-reviewed, author-driven podcasts

Metrics

- Track podcast metrics (e.g. public reporting of number of downloads, listener questions or comments etc)
- Evaluate podcast metrics in a controlled manner across select journals, particularly journals within the same publisher/network

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References: 1. Berk J et al. J Gen Intern Med. 2020;36(7):2176-2178. 2. Malecki SL et al. JMIR Med Educ. 2019;5(2):e12901. 3. Kelly JM et al. Acad Med. 2022;97(7):1079-1085. 4. Bernstein E et al. J Gen Intern Med. 2021;36(6):1598-1604. 5. Kiernan MA et al. Antimicrob Steward Healthc Epidemiol. 2023;3(1):e98. 6. Levin G et al. Int J Gynecol Cancer. 2023;33(2):183-189. 7. Thoma B et al. CJEM. 2018;20(2):300-306