Reviewer's report

Title: An exploration of student experiences of biology podcasts in pre-registration nursing.

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Reviewer: Gig Wernbacher-Searle

Reviewer's report:

1. The abstract describes the study as "exploring student experiences of the availability of ... " and goes on to describe how the podcasts were made available. The title however, refers to the experiences made by the students. It appears unclear as to whether the study aimed to access whether the students were able and willing to learn the necessary technical skills to avail themselves of this supplementary learning tool, or whether the tool itself is being evaluated as to usefulness.

2. The methods used conform to standard evaluation procedures; however the results of the evaluation appear to concentrate on the students’ evaluation of the tools. There is no conclusive evaluation of either the effectiveness (whether the students’ results were improved) or record of the actual hours spent (“using them one to three times”) during the testing period.

3. Although the authors have provided reliable data, they appear to vacillate between analysis accessibility and usefulness. While it is unarguable that a podcast can only be useful if it is accessible, these are not identical evaluation factors.

4. The authors used high standards of data collection and evaluation.

5. While the discussion is valid and relevant, it does not appear to provide any useful information not already explored in their previous paper – "Pharmacology podcasts: a qualitative study of non-medical prescribing students’ use, perceptions and impact on learning”.

6. The limitations of the work are clearly stated.

7. The authors are clearly building on previously published work.

8. The title and abstract appear at first glance to be at odds. It is unclear whether the authors wish to evaluate the students' experience, have the students evaluate the usefulness of the podcasts, or whether the availability or accessibility of the podcasts is in question.

9. The English is of a high standard, the writing is clear and well expressed. The failure of the authors to gain any definitive new insights, in comparison to the work already done, makes it impossible for me to recommend publication of the paper in its current form.

However, I am convinced that supplementary tools are necessary in the current learning environment. Should the authors have sufficient data, I am sure they
have sufficient experience to increase the knowledge of the community. The hypothesis needs to be more precise and the aim of the study more exactly described and followed.

The conclusion fails to offer concrete suggestions to improving the situation, whether this is due to availability, accessibility, technical difficulties or the technological inexperience of the students.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests