

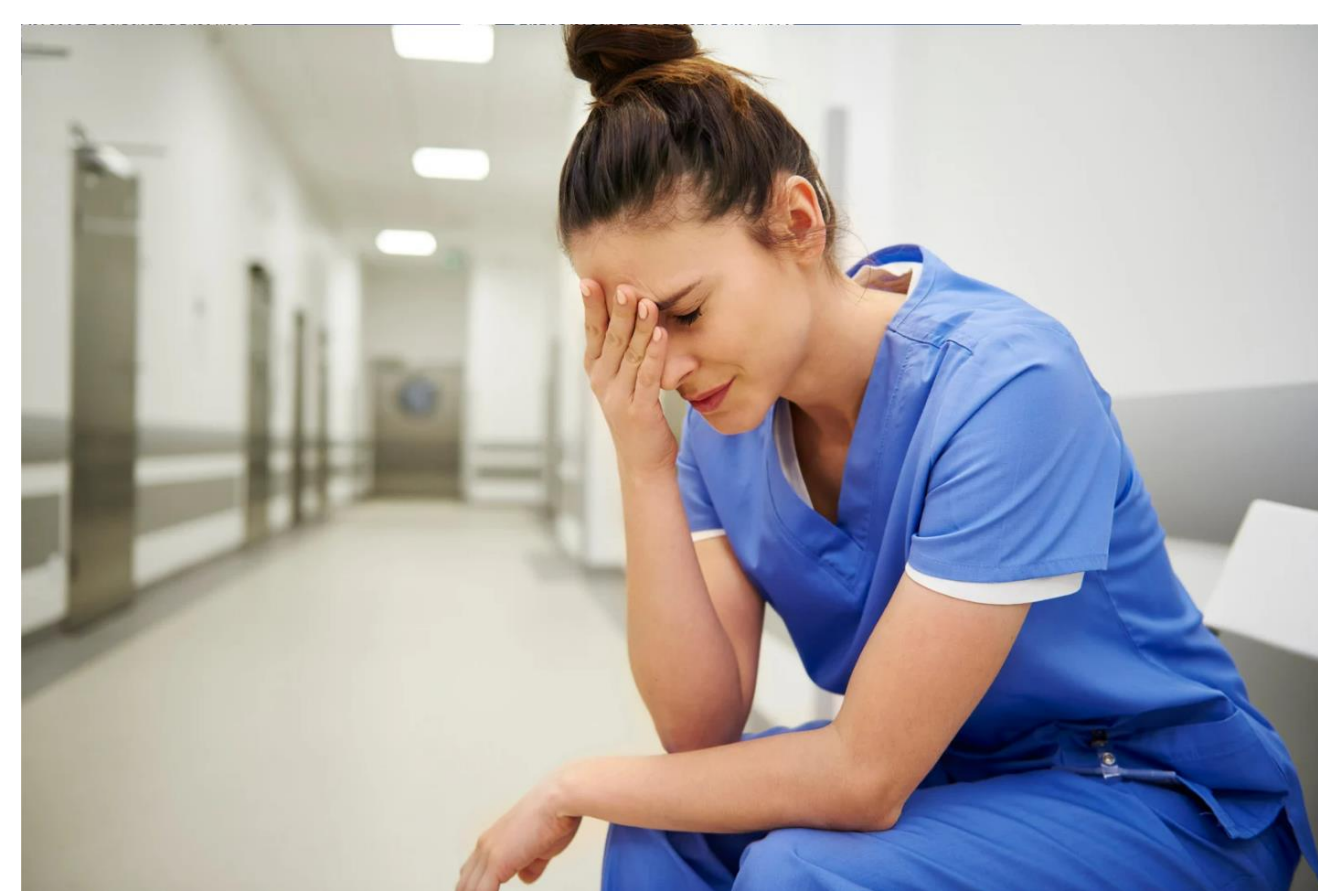
# Student perspectives on marketing the podiatry profession and course promotion: a mixed methods study

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## INTRODUCTION

The 17.3% decline in podiatry student enrolments presents an emerging workforce crisis, with several potential consequences for the profession<sup>1-5</sup>:

- threats to the **viability** of university programs
- workforce **shortages**
- reduced **capacity** of podiatrists to work to their full scope of practice - increased workloads from fewer graduates entering the workforce
- threats to the profession's **growth** and reduced impact of podiatry **advocacy** at government-level
- **burnout** in existing podiatry workforce
- negative impact on the **health and wellbeing** of Australian and New Zealand populations



**Aim:**  
To explore student perspectives on marketing the podiatry profession to inform strategies for increasing student enrolments and sustaining the workforce in Australia and New Zealand.

## METHODS

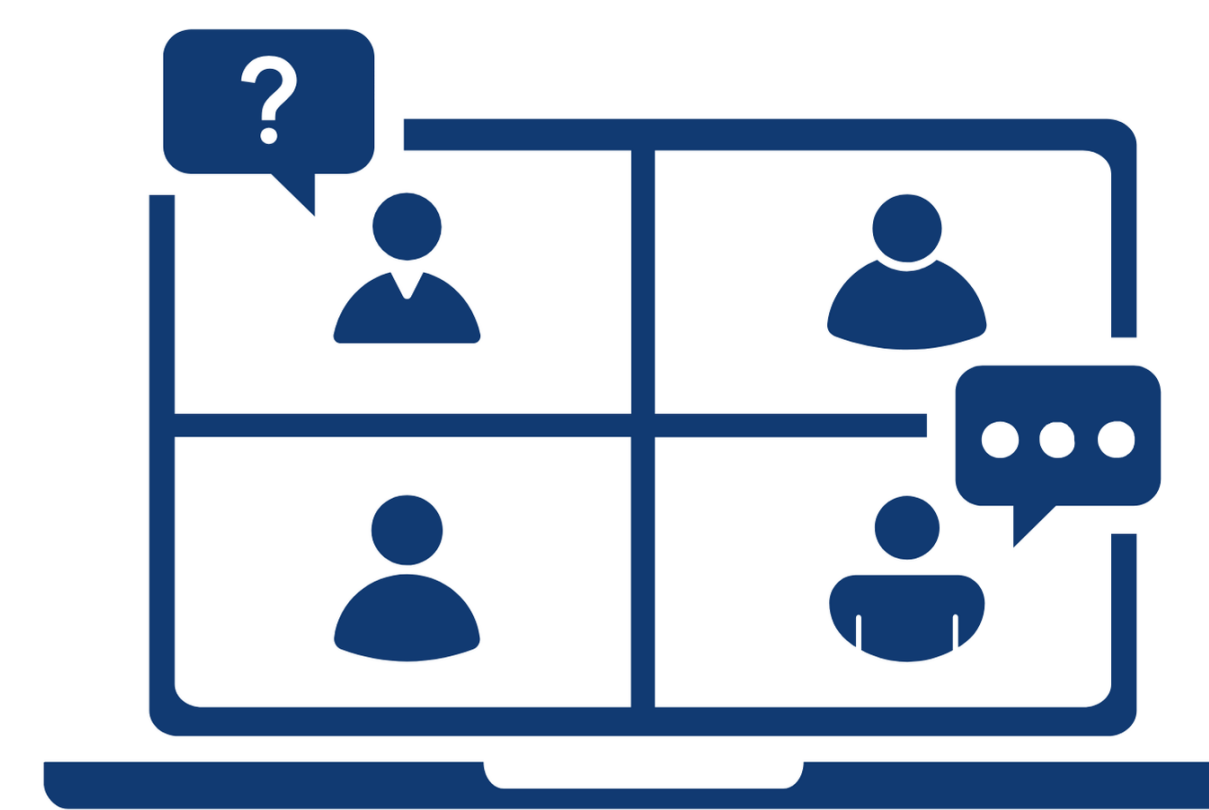
### Online survey



Podiatry students  
(Years 1-4)  
n = 278

Health, sport & science students  
(Years 1-4)  
n = 553

### Online workshops



Podiatry students  
(Year 1)  
n = 9

### STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

Design	Ethics	Quantitative analysis	Qualitative analysis
Convergent mixed methods	La Trobe University (HEC21057)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive statistics</li> <li>• Multivariate linear / logistic regression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inductive thematic analysis</li> <li>• Coding - 3 independent researchers using NVivo</li> </ul>

## RESULTS

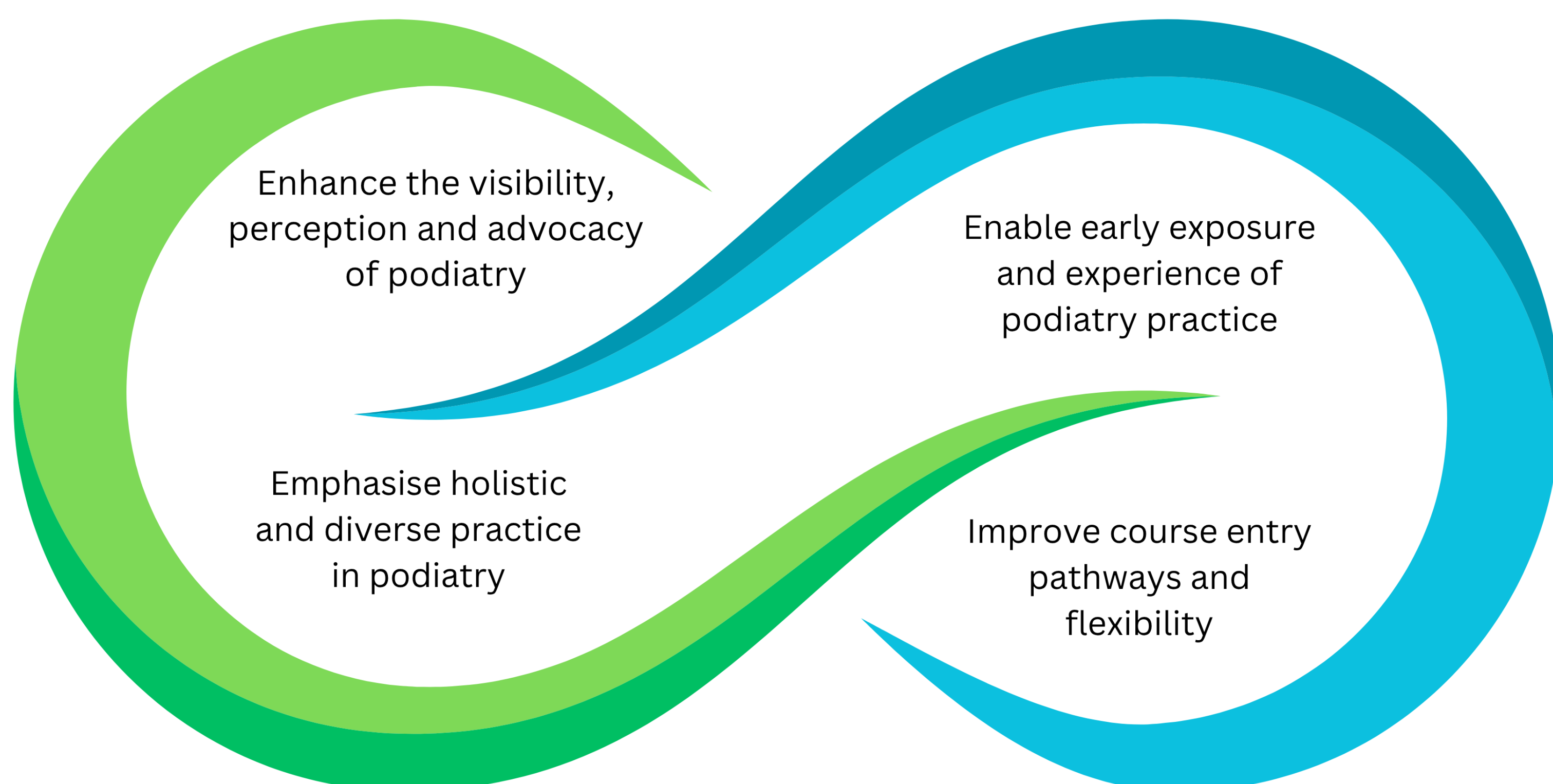
The promotion of podiatry courses and career opportunities was considered **poor**, compared to other allied health disciplines



**Instagram and Facebook** are considered the most effective social media platforms for outreach, while **university websites, high school career talks, and career exhibitions or roadshows** are viewed as the most effective traditional advertising channels

“Promote all aspects of podiatry... just think feet and it doesn't appeal to me but if you promoted it in a broader context and put it out there a lot more than it is at the moment, it may attract more students”  
-Second-year podiatry student-

“Have opportunities for prospective students and students considering transferring courses to podiatry to attend a class or placement before they apply so they can decide if podiatry is the right career path for them”  
-Second year OT student-



“...it feels like a small field with not a lot of scope for change and/or movement. I don't have an interest in feet, and it doesn't align with my desire to work in a field where the person is viewed holistically as opposed to a particular body part”  
-Fourth year OT student-

“The university did not recognise my previous occupation as I am a mature age student and it was quite difficult getting accepted”  
-Third year podiatry student-

Figure 1 Overview of student perspectives on marketing the podiatry profession and course promotion

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- Four over-arching themes emerged as important marketing strategies for increasing podiatry enrolments (Figure 1)
- Findings offer valuable strategies for promoting the podiatry profession and its education programs:
  - **addressing misconceptions** and enhancing the appeal
  - enhancing recruitment through **targeted marketing**
  - effective marketing to **increase awareness**
  - enhancing appeal through **advocacy**
  - improving the **accessibility and flexibility** of education programs
- Strengthening enrolments and reducing attrition are fundamental to ensuring the sustainability and growth of the podiatry profession in Australia and New Zealand



## REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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