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EDITORIAL

# DEVELOPING THE SOPHISTICATION OF LISTENING IN ORGANISATIONS

*Dr Mark Avery*

Editor-in-Chief, Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management

The critical impact of effective leaders listening in healthcare organisations is fundamentally about gathering and gaining operational intelligence from within the organisation. This core operational capability correlates with improved care and effectiveness across patient safety and clinical risk; quality and patient/resident outcomes; workforce sustainability; improvement innovation; and organisational resilience. Listening within organisations has become a hallmark of organisational capability, enabling leaders and managers to acquire operational intelligence. Comprehensive listening extends beyond providing staff and followers opportunities to speak, as it requires a comprehensive organisational capability (irrespective of, but proportional to, the size of the organisation). Annual surveys, suggestion schemes, and speak-up mechanisms provide valuable channels to hear feedback and enhanced listening approaches demonstrate a progressive and effective connection to those who make up and enable health organisations.

The listening paradox describes the tension between speakers' perceptions and listeners' experiences [1], with leader and manager listening most operationally valuable when information is difficult, challenging, or inconsistent with current assumptions. In these precise situations, listening places the greatest cognitive and emotional demands on leaders.

Developing listening maturity and capability in a health organisation enables a shift from episodic listening to relational, and then organisational, levels of maturity.

Employee voice needs to be an organisational capability, with systematic eliciting, collecting, processing, and clear responses to staff and followers input in our organisations [2]. Where there is minimal, or only occasional, discussion of what is happening and why, engagement to address it may be difficult. Triangulated listening enables us to use a range of listening channels already in place (surveys, operational data, exit interviews, complaints) to identify patterns across sources. Similarly, listening at upstream and downstream points of organisational decision-making creates a continuous learning cycle rather than a consultation once before change. Diagnostic and responsive listening shapes opportunities for leaders to detect what is missing, uncomfortable information signals and isolation of disparity signals. Contemporary internal digital platforms enable leaders and managers to continuously hear collective employee voice, identify any weak signals and pre-empt emerging concerns [3].

Health organisations need listening mechanisms that are broad in reach, inclusive, psychologically safe, responsive, integrated, and capable of measuring impact [2].

**International Conference on SMART Technologies for Medical & Health Sciences: AI-Driven Health Care Innovation & Integration - 13th to 15th March 2026**

Selected papers from this conference are included in this issue:

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Prof. (Dr.) Anuj Kumar, Rushford Business School, Switzerland

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The international conference on SMART Technologies for Medical & Health Sciences was conceptualised as a platform to bring together researchers, academics, clinicians, technologists and industry experts to share their knowledge, experiences and innovative ideas. The conference featured exceptional keynote speeches from healthcare experts worldwide. They shared their views on how healthcare is advancing through the integration of artificial intelligence and other technologies. The theme, *AI-Driven Healthcare Innovation & Integration*, reflected the growing significance of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in reshaping modern healthcare systems and promoting efficient, accessible and patient-centric healthcare services. Sankalchand Patel University, Visnagar, Gujarat; National Science Forensic University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat; Confab 360 Degree, India; Rushford Business School, Switzerland; the European Global Institute of Innovation and Technology, Malta; and several other academic institutions organised this conference.

**Mark Avery**
**Editor-in-Chief**


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