

HOW AI IS CHANGING MY AUDIOLOGY PRACTICE



BY JONATHAN GALT
Ace Audiology

AI is revolutionising audiology notetaking and reporting. Tasks that used to take two hours daily—like case notes and medical letters—now take me just 20 to 30 minutes. I often finish documentation right as the client leaves, confident that it's accurate.

AI scribes for health care professionals

There are several AI scribe software packages available but the leading ones in Australia are PatientNotes and Heidi Health, both thoroughly tested for privacy and safety compliance. I've used both in my clinic but prefer PatientNotes for its ease of use, clean interface and excellent note formatting.

The following sections will explain how I worked with the initial set-up and how I interact with the application daily.

As a web-based application, I can log in to PatientNotes with a laptop or smartphone. When conducting domiciliary services, I use my smartphone.

Later, at the office, I log into the desktop and everything that transpired is available and ready to transfer to my client relationship management (CRM) system. With the press of a button my notes are ready, and I write any necessary reports.

A standout feature of PatientNotes is its ability to automatically generate a personalised appointment summary that I can give to each patient. This thoughtful touch not only demonstrates an extra level of care but also earns positive feedback from clients who appreciate the added effort. Providing these summaries is something I've always aimed to do, but time constraints had previously pushed it to the back burner.

The PatientNotes set-up

There are three core prompt groups within PatientNotes: 'clinical notes', 'patient summary' and 'medical letters'. It's crucial to understand that your clinical notes serve as the foundation for the letters and patient summaries generated later. As the source of truth, they must be checked and edited for accuracy, and I know this is my responsibility.

PatientNotes has an extensive suite of clinical notes and medical letters in their 'prompt library' to help speed you along.

These can be edited for your clinical preferences and saved with a name that you prefer. An example of the process is discussed in the following sections.

PatientNotes will default to the traditional medical SOAP format unless instructed otherwise. The SOAP format is explained as follows:

- **subjective:** client discussions and goal setting
- **objective:** physical measures and observations, like hearing test results
- **assessment:** your diagnosis and recommended decisions
- **plan:** next steps agreed with the client (e.g. referrals, education, devices).

Initially I used the default SOAP format before making some small adjustments, such as:

- renaming **objective** as 'test results'
- renaming **assessment** as 'summary' for clarity

As I grew more comfortable, I created custom templates for different appointment types.

I use the professional version of PatientNotes but a two-week free trial is available. When setting up, you'll need to select a microphone source; laptops and smartphones work well natively.

In my office, I use a Microsoft



Above/ A snip of the 'adult test' template from the prompt library.

microphone—the same one that I use for Zoom meetings—which hangs on a hook outside my mini-booth and performs reliably without adjustments. In my PatientNotes profile, I've set up my preferences to provide context for more tailored responses. New users can start immediately with the default SOAP format, but here's how I make the most of it with the prompt template library.

How I use PatientNotes

I typically start by opening the patient file in Noah, logging into PatientNotes and creating a new session. I also have my CRM running in the background to transfer notes and letters from PatientNotes. In the new session, I enter my patient's name and select a prompt template. Before starting, it is important to obtain verbal consent for the recording. It is also important to update your business privacy statement to include the use of an AI Scribe. PatientNotes offers helpful resources, including verbal consent scripts, sample registration forms, email templates for record-keeping updates, and a downloadable advisory poster for waiting areas.

I typically start recording with the patient history, then pause while conducting the hearing test. Once I've gathered all results, I resume recording to explain my findings and recommendations.

I've learned to phrase results more precisely for better transcription, being specific about details like compliance and middle ear pressure for each ear, using technical terms appropriate for a medical report. If I forget something, I simply add it after pressing resume.

For example:

“Both canals were clear of wax and the tympanic membranes appear normal. The light reflex was present, and Valsalva was observed in both ears.”

Dictating is also very helpful when you forget to press 'record' or 'resume'! There is a more formal 'DictatePro' section when you might want to ad lib a letter freestyle.

As mentioned earlier, you can let PatientNotes automatically choose a template (usually using the SOAP format) or you can specify which you

prefer to use from the dropdown menu. PatientNotes has an extensive prompt library for audiology and responds quickly to specific requests. I recommend you use the prompt library and edit them to your personal preferences over time.

I found the following steps helped me when I first started, and I was then able to create my own templates based on the prompt library.

1. Go to Settings, then open the Prompt library.
2. From the Profession dropdown, select Audiologist.
3. In the Type dropdown, choose Clinical notes.
4. A menu of options will appear—select Adult test (or any from the prompt library).
5. You'll now see the prompt template for an 'adult test'.

6. Scroll to the bottom and click Add to your prompts.
7. The template is now saved in your personal prompt collection from where you can edit it further.

Usually selecting the template is straightforward. There are important distinctions to bear in mind. I found it necessary to have similar but different templates for paediatric and adult hearing assessments since 'test methodology' is relevant when assessing a child but not so for an adult. You are also more likely to perform otoacoustic emissions in the paediatric caseload.

Figure 1 is a snip of the 'adult test' template from the prompt library.

This template, applied to a recent patient interview I had, provides the output as seen in figure 2.

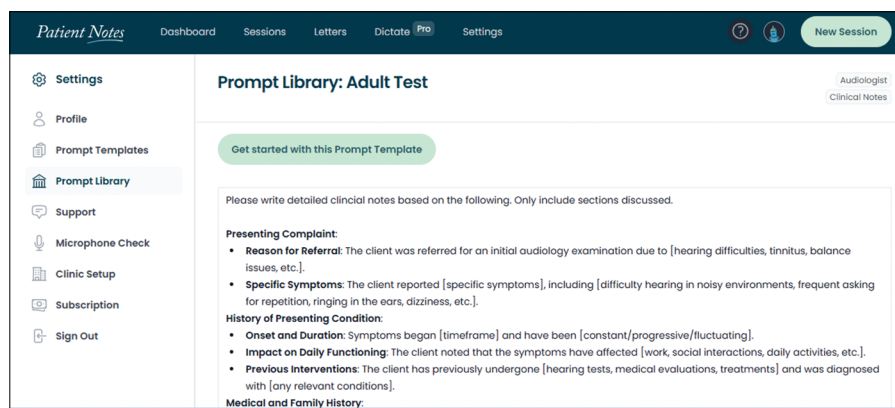


Figure 1/ A snip of the 'adult test' template from the prompt library.

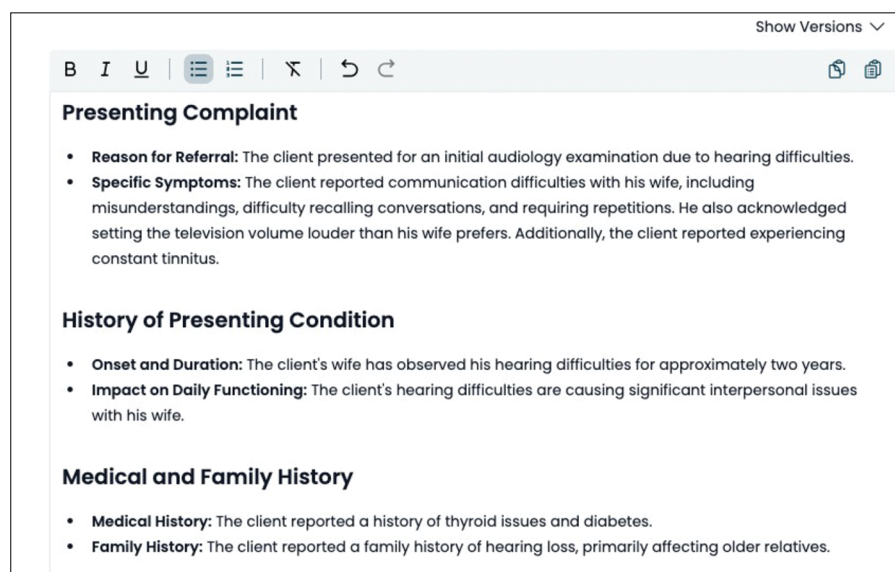


Figure 2/ The adult test template, applied to a recent patient interview I had provides the above output.

