

EDITORIAL

Social Media for Cardiovascular Medicine: Real Reflections from Virtual Medium

Social media has transformed the face of cardiovascular medicine, as a platform for delivering educational content, building collaborative research and clinical networks across the globe in real time, advocacy and peer review [1]. Although in 2019 only, 1,111 American College of Cardiology members were found to use twitter [2], and this number is increasing day by day. Cardiovascular healthcare professionals across the globe are increasingly utilizing social media for asynchronous learning at any time or place, whereby interesting cases are discussed, research is disseminated and connections as well as collaborations with like-minded clinicians and researchers with similar subspecialty expertise are formed. Social Media enables healthcare professionals to unite their voices in their quest for knowledge and health care related matters by connecting with colleagues across the globe.

The focus of this special edition is to shed light on different cardiovascular arenas where social media has allowed the dissemination of the educational message to a wider audience and facilitated discussions across a wide range of specialties and themes. This edition highlights the value of social media for the clinician, the patient, researcher and patient advocates in a broad range of arenas including interventional cardiology, imaging, heart failure, women in cardiology and scientific meetings.

The recent COVID19 outbreak has delineated the importance of social media as one of the most important platforms for healthcare professionals to share information, treatment protocols and clinical pathways for a disease where little was known only 6 months ago. Physicians, particularly from the outbreak epicenters such as Wuhan, New York and Italy, have shared their individual insights as they discover the complexity of the disease, diagnostic pathways and impact of their management decisions widely and instantly via social media through webinars and through pre-print servers such as medRxiv [3] and bioRxiv [4] allowing rapid dissemination of knowledge often weeks or months before traditional peer-reviewed scientific literature is able to do so. The network of professional connectivity created by the pandemic is here to stay and may place social media at the center stage in future healthcare crises. Furthermore, all the main scientific cardiovascular conferences, including the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) have cancelled physical scientific meetings this year to comply with social distancing regulations and nationwide governmental lockdowns and replaced them with virtual meetings, that have been delivered through virtual platforms. Even when this pandemic is over, social media platforms may represent an important means by which the digital content of future scientific meetings will be shared.

The role of social media in medicine is constantly evolving. It is important to foresee the revolution it may bring to healthcare and have a virtual voice in this interconnected community. Nevertheless, it is also imperative to realize its limitations and exercise our obligations as responsible healthcare professionals on social media [1, 5]. We begin this special issue by over-viewing social media best practices for the cardiologist [6]. We then focus around how social media can be used to disseminate and advocate research, focusing on best practices [7]. Social media can be used to augment educational activities at meetings, which is the subject of focus by Mihailidou *et al.* [8] and can be used to engage and educate our patients as overviewed by Gulati *et al.*, [9]. Social media is a powerful tool that can be used to advocate for profession groups where significant disparities exist, with a growing movement within women in cardiology for equity. Volgman *et al* discuss how social media can be used towards this end [10]. Finally, our focus turns on the utilisation of social media in sub-specialties with cardiology including imaging [11], interventional cardiology [12] and heart failure [13].

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