

SGO Journal Club Commentary

#HashtagThis – Everything you need to know about launching your gynecologic oncology social media research career: A report from *Gynecologic Oncology Reports* and Society of Gynecologic Oncology Education Committee

Megan L. Hutchcraft^{a,*}, Eric Rios-Doria^b, Tiffany Y. Sia^c, Eleonora Teplinsky^d, Shannon N. Westin^e, Gregg Nelson^f

^a Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Carle Cancer Institute, Carle Illinois College of Medicine and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL, USA

^b Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA

^c Gynecology Service, Department of Surgery, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY, USA

^d Department of Medical Oncology, Valley Health System, Paramus, NJ, USA

^e Department of Gynecologic Oncology and Reproductive Medicine, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, USA

^f Division of Gynecologic Oncology, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

A B S T R A C T

On February 6th, 2024, *Gynecologic Oncology Reports* and the Society of Gynecologic Oncology Education Committee co-hosted a webinar about ways to use social media for career enhancement and for dissemination of research. During the discussion, we reviewed:

- i. how to identify one's goals, target audience, and select a social media platform.
- ii. how to navigate the negatives of social media.
- iii. how to develop one's online academic brand.
- iv. how to use social media for academic promotion and career advancement.
- v. how to use social media as a research tool.
- vi. how to use visual tools to bring attention to one's research.

The objective of this report is to review the literature on social media in oncology and review the webinar presentation.

1. Introduction

On February 6th, 2024, *Gynecologic Oncology Reports* and the Society of Gynecologic Oncology Education Committee co-hosted a webinar about ways to use social media for career enhancement and for dissemination of research (Hutchcraft et al., 2024). The panelists included gynecologic oncology social media experts Dr. Eleonora Teplinsky, Dr. Shannon N. Westin, and Dr. Gregg Nelson. Dr. Teplinsky is a breast and gynecologic medical oncologist, the chair of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Social Media Working Group, and is host of the INTERLUDE Podcast. Dr. Westin is a gynecologic oncologist, the *Journal of Clinical Oncology (JCO)* social media editor, and the host of the *JCO* After Hours Podcast. Dr. Nelson is a gynecologic oncologist, the

Gynecologic Oncology Journals social media editor, and is a host of the *Gynecologic Oncology Journal Podcast*. The moderators were Dr. Megan L. Hutchcraft of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Urbana, IL and Dr. Eric Rios-Doria of the University of Washington in Seattle, WA. Historically, social media has been used to connect with colleagues, share medical knowledge, and promote academic publications; however, social media can also be used to educate the public and other healthcare providers about gynecologic cancers and advocate for our patients. The objective of this report is to review the literature on social media in oncology and review the webinar presentation. The webinar objectives and key takeaways are listed in Table 1.

* Corresponding author at: Carle Cancer Institute, 509 West University Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801, USA.

E-mail address: megan.hutchcraft@carle.com (M.L. Hutchcraft).

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Table 1
Webinar objectives, key webinar takeaways, and recommended resources.

Webinar Objective	Key Takeaways	Recommended Resources
How to identify one's goals, target audience, and select a social media platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the "why" behind developing one's social media presence. Determine if the intended audience is patients or other medical professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chidharla A, et al. Social Media and Professional Development for Oncology Professionals. <i>JCO Oncology Practice</i>. 2022.
How to navigate the negatives of social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set public boundaries. Do not provide medical advice. Do not engage with online "trolls." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ponce SB, et al. Netiquette for Social Media Engagement for Oncology Professionals. <i>Future Oncology</i>. 2022.
How to develop one's online academic brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build one's online presence by following key accounts. Use hashtags and emojis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Katz MS, et al. Organizing Online Health Content: Developing Hashtag Collections for Healthier Internet-Based People and Communities. <i>JCO Clinical Cancer Informatics</i>. 2019. Gynecologic social media ontologies statement: https://www.sgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/socialmediajointstatement.pdf.
How to use social media for academic promotion and career advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media to recruit clinical trial participants. Use social media to showcase one's academic success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track public engagement for academic promotion at: altmetric.com.
How to use social media as a research tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media to distribute online surveys or gather information about patient experiences. Interact with journals on social media for collaborative opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tag journal on social media post (e.g., @GynOncJnls). Attend online journal clubs.
How to use visual tools to bring attention to one's research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphical abstracts increase the number of manuscript downloads. The use of videos and graphics on social media posts increases audience engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Canva.com for graphic design needs. Use Elsevier's graphical abstract resource: https://www.elsevier.com/researcher/author/tools-and-resources/graphical-abstract.

2. Overview of webinar discussion

Dr. Teplinsky began the discussion with reasons to consider branching out beyond Twitter/X (San Francisco, CA, USA) as an academic/professional social media platform. Twitter/X is currently ideal for reaching other researchers and healthcare providers. Other social media platforms include Facebook (Menlo Park, CA, USA), LinkedIn (Sunnyvale, CA, USA), Instagram (Menlo Park, CA, USA), Snapchat (Santa Monica, CA, USA), Pinterest (San Francisco, CA, USA), YouTube (San Bruno, CA, USA), Reddit (San Francisco, CA, USA), and TikTok (Los Angeles, CA, USA). She highlighted research from Chidharla and colleagues who indicated that as of 2022, most American adults utilize YouTube (81 %) and Facebook (69 %); however, less than one quarter of American adults use Twitter/X (23 %) and TikTok (21 %) (Chidharla et al., 2022). For researchers and healthcare providers who aim to use social media for patient education, consideration of platforms that reach more of the population (e.g., YouTube and Facebook) may be of higher utility.

The first decision when considering the use of social media for

academic/professional purposes is to consider one's goals. The key question Dr. Teplinsky asked the audience to consider is *Why are you here on social media?* Having a "why" will help guide content for posting on social media. She encouraged the audience to select one platform and to try to avoid a focus on "likes" or follower counts when getting started. She recommended for anyone who is considering using social media in an academic/professional setting should review work contracts, social media policies, and ensure understanding of digital property ownership before getting started.

Dr. Teplinsky shared a few pearls about creating an academic/professional Instagram profile (Fig. 1). Because social media can be a source of misinformation, it is important to share information that supports one's credibility. The biography (bio) page should include the expert's full name, credentials, and the place of work. The bio should also include the primary focus of the social media page, such as a disease site focus or association with a podcast. When creating an academic/professional social media page, it is important to consider separation of personal and academic/professional information versus a combination.

Regarding content, information posted must be accurate and to the point. She recommended reviewing posts that performed well in terms of comments and engagement to help guide future posts. Social media can be used to promoting one's work, such as publications or award nominations. Canva (Perth, WA, Aus) is a graphic design company that can be a good resource to create graphics and logos. Setting public boundaries is necessary; it is important to avoid providing any medical advice and posting anything that a patient could retrace to themselves. As patients may contact healthcare experts on social media, consider developing an automated response or template that can be used to reply to patients to redirect them to the patient portal or office phone number.

Though there are many benefits of social media, negatives include its tendency to captivate users and take up more time than one originally planned. Dr. Teplinsky reminded the audience that the amount of time one spends on social media is ultimately a personal decision. When faced with negative comments or users who post disruptive comments ("trolls"), it is important to remember that one does not always need to engage. Ponce and colleagues described five ways to combat online trolls: 1) resist a quick response, 2) respectfully ask for clarification, 3) respond with facts, reserve, and humility, 4) redirect the topic if not a useful discussion, and 5) reject baiting (Ponce et al., 2022).

The conversation transitioned to Dr. Westin who discussed ways to use social media activity for professional and academic success. Her focus was on Twitter/X, which is the more traditionally used social media platform for medical researchers. The first step is building one's online presence, which starts with following key accounts with many followers. This can include organizations (e.g., @SGO_org), journals (e.g., @gynoncjnls), academic institutions, colleagues, collaborators, researchers, and key medical influencers. Hashtags are a way to mark specific topics that users can follow on social media. Katz and colleagues described a list of oncology specific hashtags in an effort to better organize online communities on Twitter/X (Katz et al., 2019). For gynecologic cancers, the hashtag #gynscm, short for gynecologic cancer social media, is used. In fact, in 2021 the Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO) contributed to a joint statement on gynecologic social media ontologies (Society of Gynecologic Oncology, 2021; American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists, 2021).

Hashtags can also be used at academic/professional meetings as many social media users will follow a meeting hashtag, which can enable more exposure to meeting related posts. In general, most national and international meetings will have an official hashtag. For example, the SGO meetings utilize the hashtag #SGOmtg. This can increase the number of people that see posted content and potentially increase one's overall follower count.

Dr. Westin recommended the use of eye catching and entertaining posts to increase interest in posts/tweets on Twitter/X. For example, including the use of bullet points and emojis makes a tweet/post much more interesting than a text only tweet/post. She warned about the

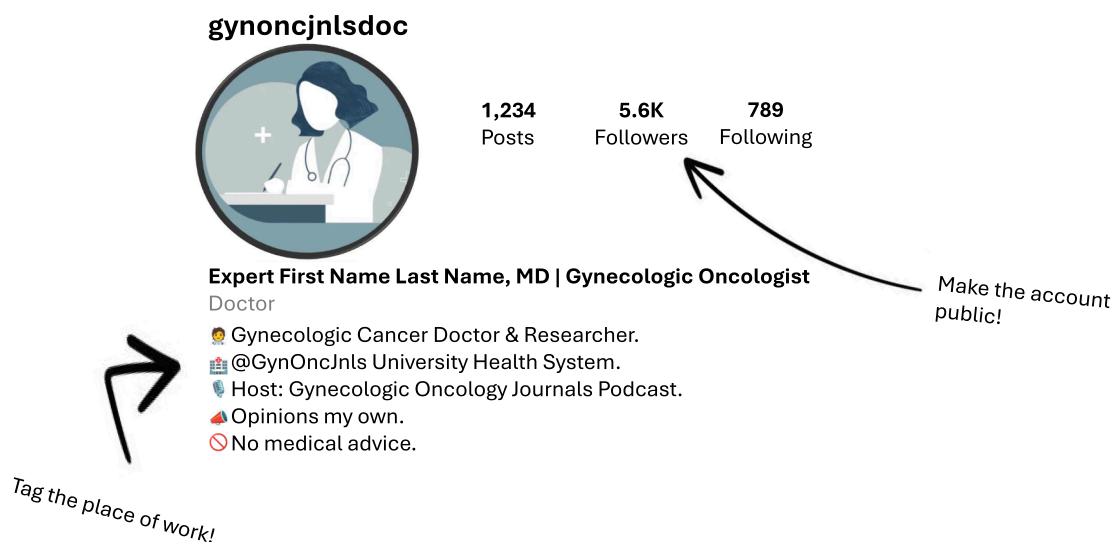


Fig. 1. Example academic/professional Instagram biography (bio) page. Key features of an academic/professional bio include one's full name, place of work, and page focus.

enduring nature of tweets/posts and recommended considering patients and future employers' perspectives when posting online. She also recommended using colleagues and mentors active in social media to help increase one's visibility when entering the academic/professional social media world. They can help announce one's presence on the platform.

Social media platforms can also be used to recruit patients for clinical trials. When posting to recruit patients for clinical trial enrollment, one must include the clinical trial name, purpose of the study, basic eligibility information, study site locations, contact information, and a link to a website with additional information. It is very important to ensure the post clarifies the treatment is investigational and does not imply certainty of benefit or safety. The post should also not promote the trial as a provision of free medical treatment. Of course, institutional review board approval should be obtained for anything that is patient-facing. Posts can also be used to showcase one's work, such as presentations at meetings, publications, or to advertise events. When highlighting research, it is important to include figures, a link to the manuscript, infographics or graphical abstracts, and be sure to tag the journal's social media account. Many medical journals, including *Gynecologic Oncology* and *Gynecologic Oncology Reports*, are increasing opportunities to interact with readers and researchers on social media. Some examples of this initiative include podcasts, social media accounts, and online journal clubs.

Historically, the only way to determine the reach of one's research was via citation counts; however, given the increase in article discussion and dissemination via social media, alternative metrics have been developed to better gauge one's reach. Altmetric (London, England) is an online tool that can track a researcher's public engagement, including with journals, in podcasts, and social media and news mentions via an Altmetric score (Altmetric; Rooney et al., 2022). Given the growth of social media use in medicine, institutions are starting to integrate this metric into considerations for academic promotion.

Dr. Nelson transitioned into a discussion on ways to use social media as a research tool (Nelson, 2022). He shared some examples of ways in which social media has been used to obtain data for research, including reporting patient experiences with gestational trophoblastic neoplasia on Instagram using the hashtag #gestationaltrophoblasticneoplasia (Chambers et al., 2022). This research provided a unique glimpse into the struggles of life for patients with the diagnosis that may not have been otherwise obtained using traditional research methods such as surveys or focus groups (Chambers et al., 2022). Social media can also be used to distribute online surveys to patients. For example, Frey and colleagues targeted survivors of ovarian cancer by promoting their

survey assessing coping strategies during the coronavirus of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in social media survivor networks on the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, Twitter/X, and Facebook (Frey et al., 2021). Esselen and colleagues were able to use a novel approach to measure financial toxicity using social media. Their team created advertisements distributed using crowdsourcing to target patients with gynecologic cancer and asked them to complete surveys regarding health-related quality of life and financial toxicity (Esselen et al., 2021). Online surveys can also be used to target other medical providers. Bhandoria and colleagues used WhatsApp (Menlo Park, CA, USA), Twitter/X, and the International Gynecologic Cancer Society's SocialLink platforms to gain insight into enhanced recovery after surgery practices worldwide (Bhandoria et al., 2020). Though using social media to approach research enables an easy opportunity to capture many research participants with few financial costs, Dr. Nelson cautioned that those who participate in surveys via social media do not represent the entire population and findings may not be generalizable. Furthermore, unequal global access to technology may perpetuate health outcomes related disparities.

When using social media to present research, Dr. Nelson reiterated Dr. Westin's suggestions and added that the use of graphical abstracts and videos improves the number of views a post receives and increases the public's engagement with the journal. He encouraged those interested in connecting with researchers to attend online journal clubs hosted by medical journals, as these can increase opportunities to become involved with the authors and with key leaders within the field of gynecologic oncology.

An effective way to distribute research on social media is using infographics or graphical abstracts. Graphical abstracts are concise pictorial and visual summaries of research, which enables readers to quickly understand the take home message of an article. Articles with infographics are eight times more likely to be shared on social media and achieve three times more downloads on journal websites (West et al., 2020). Elsevier (Amsterdam, Netherlands) provides resources on how to develop a graphical abstract (Elsevier).

3. Additional resources

The moderators and experts from this webinar are all active on social media. Drs. Hutchcraft and Rios-Doria are active on Twitter/X (@MeganLeigh127 and @RiosDoriaMD) and Instagram (@mlhseven and @eriosdoria). Dr. Teplinsky is active on Twitter/X, Instagram, and TikTok (@DrTeplinsky). Dr. Westin is active on Twitter/X

(@ShannonWestin) and Instagram (@Shannon-Westin). Dr. Nelson is active on Twitter/X (@GreggNelsonERAS and @GynMe4).

Gynecologic Oncology Journals, Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO), and the Foundation for Women's Cancer (FWC) are all active on social media. Readers can follow *Gynecologic Oncology* journals on Twitter/X and Instagram at @gynoncjnls. SGO is active on Twitter/X and Instagram as @SGO_org, Facebook as @SGO.org, and Flickr as @SGO1. SGO is available to follow on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sgo/> and their YouTube channel can be found at [youtube.com/sgynecologiconcology](https://www.youtube.com/sgynecologiconcology). FWC is active on Twitter/X as @GYNCancer, Instagram and Facebook as @foundationforwomenscancer. FWC is available to follow on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/foundation-for-womens-cancer/> and their YouTube channel can be found at [youtube.com/FdtnForWomensCancer](https://www.youtube.com/FdtnForWomensCancer).

Author contributions

Dr. Hutchcraft developed the clinical commentary. Drs. Rios-Doria, Sia, Teplinsky, Westin, and Nelson reviewed and provided edits.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Megan L. Hutchcraft: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Supervision, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Eric Rios-Doria:** Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Tiffany Y. Sia:** Writing – review & editing, Data curation. **Eleonora Teplinsky:** Resources, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Shannon N. Westin:** Writing – review & editing, Resources, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Gregg Nelson:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Resources, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: Dr. Teplinsky receives compensation from Meta. The remaining authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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