



How do health professionals use online communities to engage with their peers?

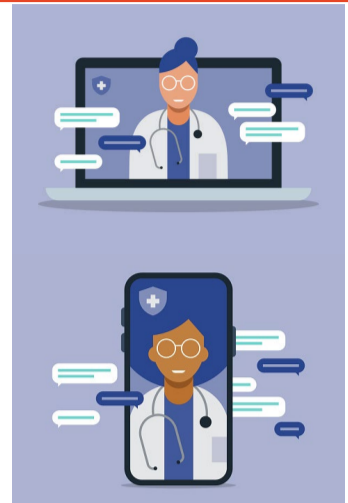


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BACKGROUND



- ☞ Online communities are groups of people or organisations who interact with others through virtual mediums (social networks, social media, discussion boards/threads/forums, chat rooms, listserv, and blogs) about common interests or concerns.
- ☞ Online communities are popular in health however most research focuses on patient-patient or patient-practitioner interactions.
- ☞ Our research is interested in how health professionals use these communities to interact with their peers.



SAMPLING and RECRUITMENT

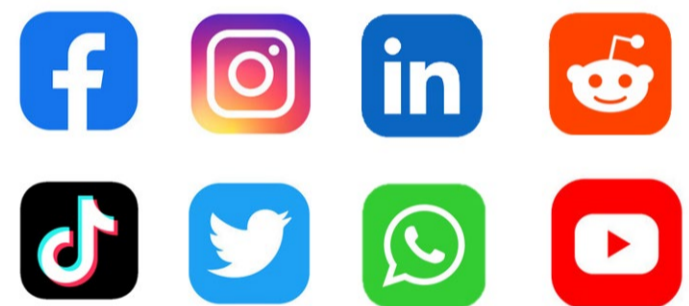


- ☞ June 2022 - social media (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit and LinkedIn), online newsletters of University research groups, national and international health services, and University's webpage. Hardcopy advertisements on noticeboards in health discipline buildings at the University campus.
- ☞ 38 surveys and 4 qualitative interviews completed, recruitment ongoing



FINDINGS

- ☞ Participants reported using a total of **18** different online community platforms for professional purposes.
- ☞ Popular platforms included Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, TikTok, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube.
- ☞ Other platforms used: Signal, Discord, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Pharmacy Club, Pharmacy Connect Conference, AllNurses.com, Podiatry and Speech Pathology Forums.



- ☞ Facebook (71.1%) was the platform with the most account ownership, followed by LinkedIn (68.4%) and Twitter (52.6%).
- ☞ Facebook had the highest proportion of daily users (39.5%), followed by WhatsApp (26.3%), and both Instagram and Twitter (42.1%).
- ☞ LinkedIn, despite many participants reporting having an account, had the highest proportion of rare users (36.8%).

Figure 1. Stacked bar graph of the frequency of use on different professional online community platforms.

Effective communication with those **geographically inaccessible** or in different **hierarchical positions**

“Communication with other academics and sharing of ideas is really important... clinicians have messaged me in Twitter because they want to reach out to me about my research ... they wouldn't have been able to otherwise.”(Interview P4, Allied Health)

Sense of belonging

“The idea of community is connection, more than anything else, it's about sharing experiences and learning from each other and realising that you're not alone.” (Interview P1, Medical)

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Recruitment for this study is ongoing.
If you're a health professional who uses social media to connect with your peers you can participate here

