

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICES OF UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENTS REGARDING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES: A CROSS-SECTIONAL, OBSERVATIONAL STUDY IN A TERTIARY CARE MEDICAL INSTITUTION IN THE EASTERN ZONE OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The objective of the study was to seek knowledge, attitude, and practice of medical students toward the use of social media for their educational purposes.

Materials and Methods: A questionnaire-based study has been conducted among undergraduate medical students in Medical College, Kolkata. A pre-structured questionnaire was circulated among the students and they were asked to fill it.

Results: A total of 275 medical students were included in the study. Almost all the students (98.9%) were aware of social media. The frequency of using social media is seen multiple times in 66.5% of respondents and about 27.6% used social media once or twice daily. Around 42.5% of the students acknowledged that social media has helped them in improving regarding their academic performance, whereas the rest disagreed with it. Most of the students (66.9%) have agreed that social media have made their learning more interesting and simplified, thereby contributing to their educational purposes.

Conclusion: We conclude from our study that the medical students informed that social media is an essential tool for acquiring information. Medical students informed that they use social media not only to amass knowledge but to improve their interprofessional communication as well.

Keywords: Undergraduate medical students, Social media, Educational purposes, Curriculum.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has assumed a newer and bigger role because of the availability of improved knowledge from multiple sources in the current era, and it has drawn a lot of attention from all age groups, especially among the younger people [1]. Social media serves as a huge source of information for medical sciences, thereby allowing them to discuss the curriculum and different strategies during their courses. Medical students are lifelong learners who need to maintain their knowledge of the diagnostic and treatment guidelines, and for this, they need to use the Internet to collect information on a regular basis [2], also they need a trustworthy platform because most of the students never cross-check whether the information provided is reliable or not. One of the biggest advantages of social media is that it helps to communicate with their fellow students thereby helping them to discuss their curriculum and strategies [3].

Social media is a comparatively new or less popular educational tool for some medical educators. However, medical students of the modern era are familiar with it as they have been accustomed to using it extensively as a tool for communication throughout their teenage and early adult life, in all matters, like their personal, professional as well as educational purposes. Social media also facilitates medical education by facilitating engagement, self-reflection, and active learning, such as self-directed learning. For example, Indian medical graduates (IMG) may utilize different social media platforms, for example, Facebook or Google for online group collaborative educational activities, sharing study materials, and interacting with and also giving or taking virtual moral support from each other [3].

Medical facilitators may use YouTube videos teaching various topics in classroom lectures as their exclusive teaching-learning tools. Students may also take the help of YouTube videos and also learning apps to review and understand difficult concepts outside class hours [4].

The use of social media through smartphones or web-based software has given a new direction in the life of medical students in terms of gaining knowledge. It has been found at the proper use of social media has led to the increase in professional development of doctors as well as, facilitation of doctor-patient communication [5,6].

The objective of this study was knowledge, attitude, and practices of undergraduate medical students regarding the use of social media for educational purposes.

Objective

The objective of the study was to seek knowledge, attitude, and practice of undergraduate medical students toward the use of social media in their educational purpose.

METHODS

Study design

A questionnaire-based, cross-sectional, observational study.

Study area

The study area was Department of Pharmacology, Medical College, Kolkata.

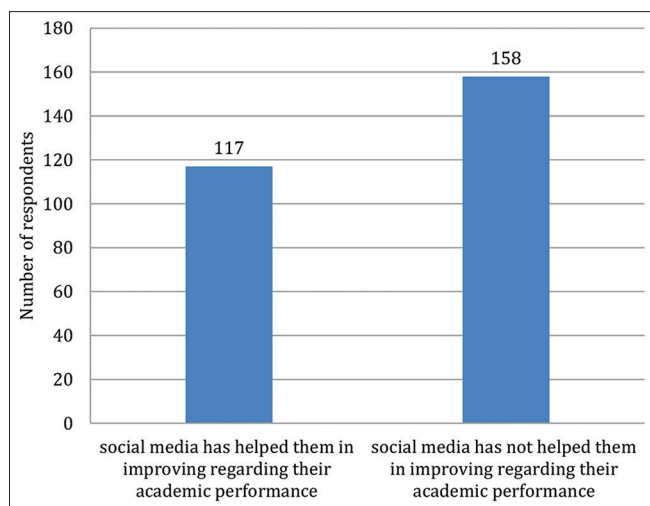


Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on whether or not social media has helped them in improving academic performance

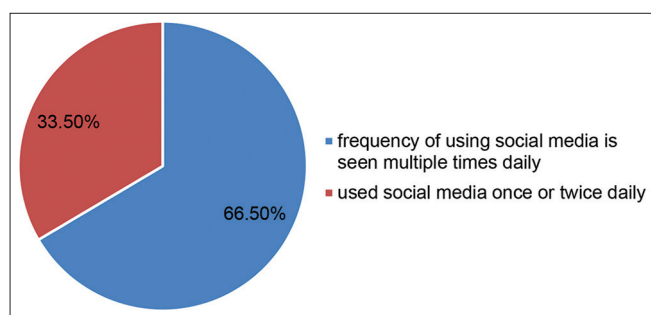


Fig. 2: Distribution of respondents according to frequency of using social media

Student population

Two hundred and seventy-five undergraduate students of Medical College, Kolkata.

Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria undergraduate students of MBBS who voluntarily participated in the study.

Method

Ethics permission from the Institutional Ethics Committee (Ref No. MC/KOL/IEC/NON-SPON/2188/09/2023) was taken before the commencement of the study. A pre-structured questionnaire was circulated among the students and they were asked to fill it. Questions were selected regarding indications of the use of social media, knowledge related to and reason for its uses.

RESULTS

A total of 275 medical students of Medical College, Kolkata, participated in this study.

Almost all the students (98.9%) were aware of social media. 41.5% of students knew that they could obtain educational information from social media beyond their books, 98.6% of the students thought that social media has both positive and negative impacts, and 96.4% of the students agreed that being on social media consumed a lot of time.

As far as attitude regarding social media was concerned, 45.8% of the students considered that the use of social media has truly become an integral part of the medical field. 47.3% of the medical students thought

that social media has instilled more creative skills in them. 70.4% of them have an attitude that social media is affecting their life.

DISCUSSION

42.6% of the students have acknowledged that social media has enabled them to accelerate their academic performance (Figure 1), whereas around 67.1% of the medical students have agreed that social media has made their learning more interesting. The number of social media revisits was seen to be multiple times in 66.5% of respondents and about 33.5% of respondents used social media once or twice daily (Figure 1)

Social media offers a platform for medical students to see support and advice from their peers and experienced professionals medical student [7]. Many organizations of social media platforms to offer educational welfare and give lectures and online courses. Medical students can benefit from these resources to complete their additional learning and stay engaged with ongoing medical discussions. In our study, around 42.5% of the students have considered that social media has equipped them to improve their academics which is quite less as compared to a study (92%) started by Bharat *et al.* [6] More than 98% of the students were aware of the pros and cons of social media. Previous studies by other authors have concluded the same [8,9].

The strength of my study is that 275 undergraduate medical students have been asked to fill out the questionnaire which is an adequate number of students. The limitation of my study is that only undergraduate medical students from a single medical college have participated in this study, and thus it is a single-center study. Hence, the findings of this study may not be generalized to undergraduate medical all over the country.

Social media has become indispensable in the medical field, considered by the IMG. Around 45.8% of medical students opine that whereas 47.3% have agreed that social media has bought creative skills among them. The majority of students (67.1%) have agreed that social media has made their learning more interesting and simplified. These observations are in agreement with the other studies [10,11]. The frequency of use of social media is moderately high in our study (67%) which is much like the results obtained from other studies [12].

CONCLUSION

Social media is an extremely mandatory study tool exclusively for SDL as informed by medical students, thereby helping them to share information and promote healthy behavior. It can be used to get more wider knowledge and connect with learning groups, thus helping in educational establishments.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All the authors have contributed to the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None of the authors have any conflict of interest.

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No financial assistance has been taken from any organization.

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