Using Facebook to support exam preparation in a clinical therapeutics module

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Background: Social media platforms are increasingly utilised for educational purposes¹, with Facebook being the most popular networking site². A Facebook page was created to engage students in assessment through online discussion of sample questions, module content, web resources and FAQs. The aim of this study was to gauge student opinion on this method of teaching.

Method: Facebook data (likes, posts etc) were downloaded for descriptive analysis. A survey was administered via e-mail and Facebook to all 4th year students (n=171), to gauge students' views on the usefulness of the page.

Results: The page received 142 "likes" indicating that 142 people followed it. Total "engagement" peaked on 20/01/14 (the exam sat on 21/01/14) with 369 (indicates the number of clicks and posts). The peak weekly "reach" (number of page views) was on 23/01/14 and totalled 2391. The peak "hit" rate was 9234 on 20/01/14. 48 students (28%) completed the survey. 69% found the page very useful, with 78% (strongly) agreeing that it benefitted exam performance. 91% valued module leader support and 86% valued practice MCQs. Comments were positive around usefulness of the page, tutor feedback and motivation, and questions with worked answers. Peer support was valued highly (71%).

Discussion and Conclusion: Students widely use social media to communicate about studies³. This evaluation demonstrates that students engage in social learning if it is perceived as having a direct benefit to assessment.

References

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