What are Manchester pharmacy students' perceptions of social media in education?

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Background: Pharmacy¹, and medical educators² are embracing social media. This study aimed to gauge this institution's students' opinion and experience of social media in teaching.

Method: Undergraduate students across four years (n=623) were invited to take part in a survey regarding their views of social media in education.

Results: A total of 196 (31%) responded. 180 (92%) reported actively using social media - in particular: Facebook (79%), Instagram (46%), and Twitter (39%). Students had experience with discussion boards (79%), chat (70%) and file sharing (68%), but little experience of webinars (11%). 58% would use Facebook for studies: group work (80%), communication (77%), further reading (71%), exam preparation (68%) and peer support (67%). 55% welcome social media in education but, interestingly, 57% prefer to use Blackboard exclusively. 47% felt they would have concerns about privacy.

Discussion and Conclusion: Manchester students engage with social media and have educational experience with it. Students have concerns around personal privacy. Clinical educators believe social media offers advantages over drawbacks³. However, pharmacy students have reservations regarding online professionalism and confidentiality⁴.

References

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