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Social media: A tool to spread information: A case study analysis of Twitter conversation at the Cardiac Society of Australia & New Zealand 61st Annual Scientific Meeting 2013



Caleb Ferguson, RN, MHIth, BScN^{a,*}, Sally C. Inglis, RN, PhD,
BHSc (Hons), BN^a, Phillip J. Newton, RN, PhD, BN (Hons)^a,
Peter J.S. Cripps, GradCert Public Affairs^b,
Peter S. Macdonald, MBBS, FRACP, PhD, MD^c,
Patricia M. Davidson, RN, PhD, MEd, BA^{a,d}

^a Centre for Cardiovascular and Chronic Care, Faculty of Health, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

^b International Association of Business Communicators, NSW Chapter, Sydney, Australia

^c St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney and Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, Australia

^d School of Nursing, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

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Summary

Background: The World Wide Web has changed the way in which people communicate and consume information. More importantly, this innovation has increased the speed and spread of information. There has been recent increase in the percentage of cardiovascular professionals, including journals and associations using Twitter to engage with others and exchange ideas. Evaluating the reach and impact in scientific meetings is important in promoting the use of social media.

Objective: This study evaluated Twitter use during the recent 61st Annual Scientific Meeting at the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand.

Methods: During the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand 2013 61st Annual Scientific Meeting Symplur was used to curate conversations that were publicly posted with the hashtag #CSANZ2013. The hashtag was monitored with analysis focused on the influencers, latest tweets, tweet statistics, activity comparisons, and tweet activity during the conference. Additionally, Radian6 social media listening software was used to collect data. A summary is provided.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +61 2 8582 3569.

E-mail address: caleb.ferguson@uts.edu.au (C. Ferguson).

Results: There were 669 total tweets sent from 107 unique Twitter accounts during 8th August 9 a.m. to 11th August 1 p.m. This averaged nine tweets per hour and six tweets per participant. This assisted in the sharing of ideas and disseminating the findings and conclusions from presenters at the conference with a total 1,432,573 potential impressions in Twitter users tweet streams.

Conclusion: This analysis of Twitter conversations during a recent scientific meeting highlights the significance and place of social media within research dissemination and collaboration. Researchers and clinicians should consider using this technology to enhance timely communication of findings. The potential to engage with consumers and enhance shared decision-making should be explored further.

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1. Background

The World Wide Web has changed the way in which people communicate and consume information (Bakshy, Rosenn, Marlow, & Adamic, 2012). More importantly, this innovation has increased the speed and spread of information. Once solely the purview of clinicians – now patients, researchers and policy makers have access to scientific information in real time. Moreover, researchers are no longer dependent on formal media outlets; the power to disseminate information is in their hands.

Web 2.0 allows users to independently generate and publish content allowing for instantaneous feedback and ongoing commentary. Twitter is a micro-blogging platform limited to 140 characters in text. There has been recent increase in the percentage of cardiovascular professionals, including journals and associations using Twitter to engage with others and exchange ideas (Redfern, Ingles, Neubeck, Johnston & Semsarian, 2013). Twitter is increasingly being used during scientific conferences to allow for 'real-time' parallel conversations, dissemination, critique and open appraisal of studies, collaboration and professional networking. An example of this was The Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand 2013 61st Annual Scientific Meeting held on the Gold Coast, Australia in August 2013 which used the hashtag #CSANZ2013. A Twitter hashtag or the # symbol is used to highlight keywords or topics in a tweet. Hashtags were originally created by Twitter users as a method to categorize messages. (Twitter, 2014). People may use the hashtag #symbol before a relevant keyword; in this case #CSANZ2013 in their tweet to categorize these tweets and help users find them more easily in a Twitter search. This hashtag bound attendees to contribution to debate and discussion before, during and after the conference. Non-attendees were able to read, contribute, engage, review and re-post updates. Evaluating the reach, engagement, potential impact and overall use around scientific meetings is important in understanding the use of social media.

2. Objective

This study evaluated Twitter use during the recent 61st Annual Scientific Meeting at the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand.

3. Methods

During the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand 2013 61st Annual Scientific Meeting Symplur™ (www.symplur.com) was used to curate conversations that were publicly posted with the hashtag #CSANZ2013. The hashtag was monitored via <http://www.symplur.com/healthcare-hashtags/csanz2013> with analysis focused on the influencers, latest tweets, tweet statistics, activity comparisons, and tweet activity during the conference. The hashtag #CSANZ2013 was monitored from 8 August 2013 0900h–11th August 2013 1300h. (7th August 1600h–10 August 1900h LA time adjusted on Symplur). Additionally, Radian6™ social media listening software was used to collect data (Radian6, 2013). A summary is provided in the tables and figures below. Descriptive statistics were used to describe trends and frequencies.

4. Ethical approval

Ethical approval was sought for this study; however, it was deemed not appropriate as the Tweets are published in the public domain, and this study is documenting the frequency, reach and impact rather than the content of the tweets. Tweeters have been de-identified to further protect anonymity.

5. Results

Data were generated using Symplur™ HealthCare Social Media Analytics on 12 August at 9 a.m. There were 669 total tweets sent from 107 unique Twitter accounts during 8th August 9 a.m. to 11th August 1 p.m. This averaged nine tweets per hour and six tweets per participant. This assisted in the sharing of ideas and disseminating the findings and conclusions from presenters at the conference with a total 1,432,573 potential impressions in Twitter users tweet streams.

The pre-conference satellite-meeting day (8th August, 2013) generated the largest number of tweets with a total of 215 tweets posted. A total of 779 tweets were posted during the week of the conference from Monday 5th to Sunday 11th August using the hashtag #CSANZ2013. The peak of

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