

AUTHOR'S REPLY

Reply to: Sosnowski R, Lemiński A, van Gurp M. Social Media – the growing role in urology. Cent European J Urol. 2016; 69: 299-300.

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With the recently celebrated 25th anniversary of the introduction of the internet, we have realized that the way we communicate and interact professionally has changed forever. Social media (SoMe) has been a turning point in the way knowledge and information is spread throughout the scientific world. Thanks to SoMe, thousands of kilometers between people can disappear in a few seconds with just one click. Nowadays, around 40% of the world's population has an internet connection (view all on a page?). In 1995, this percentage was less than 1%. The number of internet users has increased ten-fold from 1999 to 2013. The first billion was reached in 2005 and the second billion in 2010 [1].

We believe that the use of SoMe is only the beginning of potential medical applications. SoMe such as WhatsApp, Viber and Periscope are used to spread information (files, videos and calls) on a global scale in a few seconds and still have not been fully studied in a professional environment. The limits and barriers of confidentiality is what remains to be elucidated, but undoubtedly SoMe is here to stay and it will continue to be used to spread and find new scientific and professional uses.

The fast growth of SoMe has resulted in several unanswered questions:

1. Can the issue of confidentiality concerning medical information shared by people through SoMe become problematic for some users? "all people have access to a Tweet"
2. Could new types of SoMe emerge that in a professional way will allow content sharing between doctors, nurses or other healthcare workers?
3. Will the information obtained for research purposes through SoMe be reliable?
4. What will be the new laws formulated to regulate the content and passage of information on SoMe in professional environments?
5. Will the number of SoMe users keep growing in the next few years?

There are examples of successful SoMe use for research purposes. Perhaps we are witnessing a change in the way of communication and what we have experienced so far is just the beginning. The use of SoMe for scientific purposes and investigations is a reality that is about to be exploited, but what will be its limits? [2, 3].

With great power comes great responsibility and SoMe is a great example of this. Users such as healthcare professionals, hospitals and institutions should keep up their hard work in the research of this field.

References

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