

@Toxicology in the Twittersphere: More than just 140 characters

November 11 2013

A valuable role exists for the use of social media in medicine, new research has shown.

Dr Joe-Anthony Rotella, in a letter to the editor in the latest Early View issue of *Emergency Medicine Australasia*, the journal of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, describes his investigation into the use of Twitter by individuals or organisations involved in clinical [toxicology](#) and poison control.

With Dr Anselm Wong and Dr Shaun Greene, all from the Victorian Poisons Information Centre in the Emergency Department of Austin Health, Dr Rotella conducted an audit of Twitter in August 2013.

Using the in-built search engine, with "poison", "poison control", and "toxicology" as search keywords, the audit yielded a sample of 51 relevant accounts with an average of 1,084 followers (range 6-19,200).

34 were organisations (including @Erowid, a user reporting and harm minimisation website for recreational drug use), of which 20 were poison control center accounts.

17 were individual clinicians working in the field of clinical toxicology and/or poison control.

Of those accounts, 38 accounts had sent out a tweet relating to toxicology in the past 90 days: 1418 were tweets with information

relating to diagnosis, management, investigation or conferences; 1042 contained links to articles via journals, PubMed or other websites; 10 were photos of relevant material; and 8 were links to videos.

Also observed were a number of hashtags, such as #FOAMtox, which provided another means for users to discuss matters relating to clinical toxicology.

"Emergency medicine clinicians can use Twitter as a means to further enhance their knowledge and obtain up-to-date information on toxicology," Dr Rotella said.

"Social media also offers a means for similarly interested individuals to connect across the world.

"Whilst informative, as with all medical literature, the same process for critical appraisal should be applied to information obtained from Twitter."

Twitter has been previously reported as a rapid means of disseminating medical [information](#), specifically the H1N1 epidemic.

More information: [DOI: 10.1111/1742-6723.12146](https://doi.org/10.1111/1742-6723.12146)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: @Toxicology in the Twittersphere: More than just 140 characters (2013, November 11) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-11-toxicology-twittersphere-characters.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.