

## Social Media in Sleep Medicine: Use or don't use?

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In recent times, references are made to information obtained from facebook, twitter, and other social media sites. The tone of such messages is typically matter of fact with an implicit regard that such informational sources are expected. The times where scientific validity is regarded above all with regard to information is waning to the attractive immediacy of these social network sources. The peer review, abstract submission and invited manuscript process of publication of scientific information, while made efficient with the intranet are in contrast to the immediacy of the social media/networked information. A question arises with this reality; can social media be of use in the field of sleep medicine?

The informality of social media does not provide an acceptable standard for the presentation of information. The lack of referenced sources similar to a rigorous peer review does not indicate its value to the field. Additionally, the typical cryptic, communiques provide little communication worth. For some types of social media, such as Facebook, the presentation of information has more of a marketing, public relations slant than factual. The attempts to provide educational information are usually done with brevity. The strongest reason for not using social media is that not all patients and peers use all of the varied sources (i.e., twitter, Facebook, linked in), and thus, a purpose to connect to patients is uncertain.

For some reasons, the existence of social media is prompted into use by the patient. A request to communicate by email, to be able to post on Facebook and chat functions on webpages are visited with a request to have questions answered about sleep questions. The constant availability of social networking sources that are everyday all day provides a viable outlet for resources. Public use of appointment setting with physicians has grown in popularity. The convenience of social media can be monitored with the appointment of closed listings for Facebook pages and webmasters for webpages that may be used by Sleep Clinics and Lab. The educational materials and research listings could be reviewed by an established person thus, verifying their validity.

Should social media be used in the field of Sleep Medicine? The answer remains with the particular Sleep Clinic or Laboratory. The immediacy of accessibility to the patients/populace can be monitored with circuted Sleep professionals that vet information for use. The advantage of being able to connect with our patients more quickly, more conveniently, is offset by careful setups and monitoring of sources. To date, little evaluation of utility of social media is conducted; hopefully future research agendas will consider these issues.

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