

INCREASING ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS : OPPORTUNITIES AND CONCERNS

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Mohd. Abdul Azeem*, Sharafat Hussain**

sharafat.hussain87@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Adoption of social media amongst health care organizations is thriving. Healthcare providers have begun to connect with patients via social media. While some healthcare organizations have taken the initiative, numerous others are attempting to comprehend this new medium of opportunity. These organizations are finding that social networking can be an effective way to monitor brand, connecting with patients, community, and patient education and acquiring new talent.

This study is conducted to identify the purpose of using social media, concerns, policy and its implementation and the overall experience of healthcare organizations with social media. To collect first hand data, online questionnaire was sent via LinkedIn to 400 US healthcare organizations and representatives out of which 117 responded and were taken further for analysis.

The results of this study confirm the thriving adoption, increased opportunities and cautious use of social media by healthcare organizations. The potential benefits present outweigh the risk and concerns associated with it. Study concluded that social media presence will continue to grow into the future and the field of healthcare is no exception.

Key words : Healthcare and social media, Social media in the US healthcare, Social media policy for healthcare organizations, Hospitals using social media, Healthcare privacy on social media.

INTRODUCTION:

The idea of social media is on top of the plan for many businesses today. Leaders, entrepreneurs and experts attempt to utilize best of these platforms such as; Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The meaning of online social networking is wide and continually advancing. The term for the most part alludes to Internet based devices that permit people and groups to accumulate and impart; to share data, thoughts, individual interests, messages, audio-visual and documents. Online networking is technically known as "web 2.0" or "social networking".

Networking sites give a box of pandora with

features that fill diverse needs of a user. Each of these site is built with a certain purpose like social networking (Facebook), professional networking (LinkedIn), media sharing (YouTube), content production (blogs) and knowledge/data collection (Wikipedia).

Uses For Social Media In Us Health Care:

The patient-doctor relationship has been continually changing over time. In today's world it is exceptional with technological presence. Doctors have begun to connect with patients via social media. Utilization of social networking sites in the US healthcare organizations is thriving. These organizations are finding that social

* Dean, School of Commerce & Business Management, ** Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Management & Commerce, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad (Telangana)

networking can be an effective way to monitor brand, connecting with patients, community, and patient education and acquiring new talent. Use of social media is also expanding among medical service providers. In a study It is found that 50% of doctors were using social networking for personal reasons. Of them 7% use it for professional reasons likewise social networking among pharmaceutical companies has increased as well. According to a recent report 130 thousand doctors use professional social media sites and more than 60 million people engage in health-related social media activities.

Health care organizations like hospitals and clinics are progressively adopting social networking to connect with their potential target audience. 26 percent at US hospitals participating in social media in some way and nearly 4,000 social media sites being owned by US hospitals, among those commonly use social media sites are Facebook YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn. Google+ and Pinterest trailing behind.

Information shared on these platforms by these organizations range from breaking health news to ongoing organizational events. The common activities that hospitals are using social media for includes providing patient education, corrective wellness motivation and patient service, and for promoting hospital positions and general health awareness and for promoting hospital events.

With eighty percent to today's consumers going online first when evaluating medical providers. A study was conducted to find out the online networking of people on their decision of choosing doctors, dentists and hospitals online. Members who picked up doctors online were 41.9% , dentists 34.1% and hospitals 41.7% . The study concludes that social networking influence people when it comes to making health care decision. In different study it was found that health care organizations use social media for the engagement activities like fund raising, customer care and technical support. They also use it for information sharing, patient education and to advertise new services.

Let us take a closer look at two specific

areas for social media where it is having an impact on public health care. First being Physician- Patient interaction and second Patient-to-Patient online communities.

Doctor to patient interaction:

Medical professionals are not only using social media as a platform to engage and discuss with colleagues but they're also using it disseminate information to their patients and as an outpatient monitoring technique. In an article from the US News doctor Feres Samimi said that social media has changed our dynamic and a striking way. If you look at online activity, one of the most common activities is looking for health information. The use of social media by health care professionals is proving to be advantageous for both the patients and the doctors. One of the examples of how social media as being used can be drawn from the Boston Marathon bombings. After reading about the bombings on Twitter emergency and trauma teams were able to stop elective surgeries and prepared for the incoming trauma patients. Social media gave them much more time to prepare in advance. Time they would not have had if they had waited for traditional news reports. This is just one way that social media helped and in emergency situation but it continues to help and post trauma or post surgical needs as well. Ruthie Moore, director of nursing at the Navy Marine Course Relief Society says that Marines, especially, are reluctant ask for help. In order to overcome this barrier Moore and her team of nurses turned to social media. They helped by creating Twitter and Facebook pages separate from their personal accounts that they used to monitor their patients and provide them with helpful articles or videos pertaining to issues affecting marines. Whenever these nurses find a post on social media that indicated some marine might be having a hard time, the nurse followed up and checked on them. They just give a simple phone call or they stop by the marine's house to check. By doing this they were able to prevent 12 suicides.

Patient-patient online communities:

While majority of patients receive most of their healthcare information from doctors and hospital websites it is certain that patient to patient social media interaction is playing an increasing role in people's healthcare decision making. The ability for patients with similar diagnosis connects with each other via social media has become a valuable tool help individual with chronic illnesses and health issues. Posting updates about conditions and its effect draws attention from family and the friends and the rest of the online community. These people form support network allow these patients to express their thoughts and concerns. It is especially useful for the patients dealing with depression due to their medical conditions. Patients may also share medical laws with each other. There are even scenarios where patients discuss the pros and cons of various surgical procedures.

A research was conducted to compare two social media sites that aim to support patient to enhance self-management the comparison was between www.PatientsLikeMe.com and www.healthshare.com. This study highlighted that PatientsLikeMe.com effectively encourages patient's self-management, while healthshare.com connects patients, share info and acts as health information social hub. Patient to patient interaction via social media is an extremely valuable resource for medical researchers. As individuals' experience can be mined for information so that doctors are well informed about stories going of patients. Some organizations have counsels for social network disaster for patient-to-patient interaction. Living with a rare disease can be an isolating experience. www.RareConnect.com was created by EURORDIS (European Rare Disease Organisation) and NORD (National Organization for Rare Disorders) to provide a safe space where individuals and families affected by rare diseases can connect with each other, share vital experiences, and find helpful information and resources.

Risks and concerns:

While the majority doctors say patient-to-patient interaction is positive, some still remain skeptical. Although doctor-patient interaction via social media has many potential benefits, there are some risks and concerns associated with this channel of communication. Social media can, for example, make it easy to violate patient privacy potentially exposing which is the violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

According to an article social media may make privacy violations more concerning they might otherwise be because they distribute information instantaneously to a wide audience and because unlike verbal conversations, Social media creates permanent electronic record it is likely discoverable in litigation.

An article describing the benefits and challenges of using social media from patient perspective reveals that patients are more in number while using social media in health care. This study also indicated that effectiveness of social media is limited along with several privacy and security concerns. Manipulation of identity and misinformation is prevalent. Article concluded that social media holds guarantee for enhancing patient engagement and stretching the community there are some challenges to overcome before the innovation can accomplish its potential.

Several difficulties emerge when health care institutions utilize social networking sites. It requires more resources and more research to determine the impacts of the use of social media for health care. The quality and cost are the two other aspect of it. A continuous research is obliged to legitimize the use of social networking in health care services.

General organizational concerns are reputation, privacy and productivity including patient consent, employment policy and the virtual relationship. Consequences regarding policy violation should also be defined hence, it is very important for health care organizations to form a policy and guidelines for the appropriate use of social media by their staff.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

The study helps to understand the purpose of using social media by Healthcare organisations. It evaluates the tools of Social Media being used by Healthcare organization and investigates the concern and guideline of Healthcare Organisations regarding use of Social Media. It also helps to know the experience of healthcare organisations with social media. The study will also bring about the current impact of Social Media in Healthcare. The study outcomes help in making further strategic decision in regards to use of social media by healthcare professionals.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The objective of the study:

The objective of the study is to identify the purpose of using social media by healthcare organizations.

To understand social media concerns, policy and its implementation by healthcare organizations and the overall experience of healthcare organizations with social media.

Methodology:

To collect primary data, online questionnaire

was sent via LinkedIn messages. All respondents were US healthcare professionals and providers. All of these respondents were associated with medical profession and medical organizations.

In this study Whitepapers, Journals, Websites, Magazines and Newspapers are used as the source of secondary data.

The technique of sampling unit in this study is convenience sampling. Questionnaire was sent to 400 US healthcare organizations and representatives out of which 117 responded and taken for study.

The time period of the study is 45 days. From 28th January 2015 to 19th March 2015.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

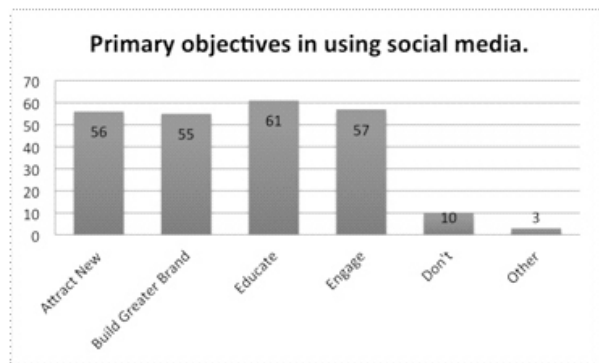
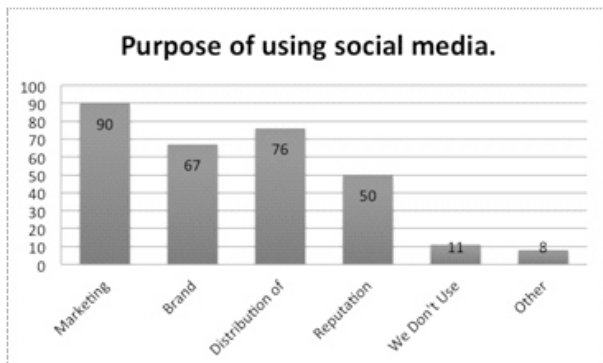
RESPONDENTS DATA: There were total 117 organizations that participated in the survey as shown in table 1, of which 90 were hospitals (76.92%), 67 were clinics (57.26%), 76 were pharmaceutical companies (64.96%), 50 were other individual medical provider (42.74%) and 11 were in the category of 11 (9.40%). A detailed respondent response is given in Table 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Table 1: Respondents Data

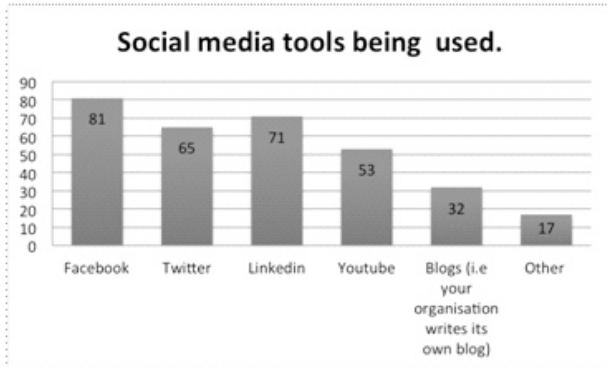
	Hospital	Clinic	Pharmaceutical Company	Other Medical Provider	Other (Please Specify)	Standard Deviation	Responses
All Data	37 (31.62%)	26 (22.22%)	26 (22.22%)	26 (22.22%)	2 (1.71%)	11.52	117

PURPOSE OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA
:Organizations were asked about the purpose of using social media. Data shows that most of the organizations use social media for Marketing

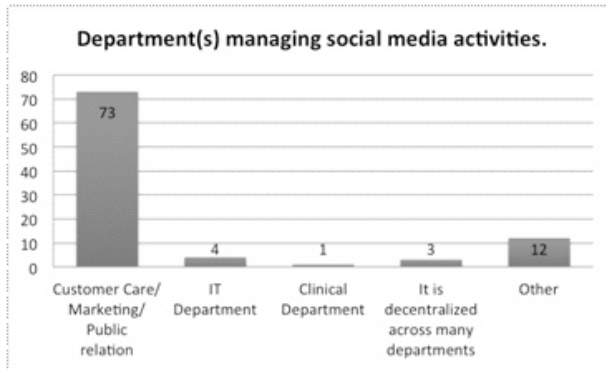
Services and Products (76.92%), and Distribution of Educational Information (64.96%) followed by Brand Management (57.26%) and Reputation Management (42.74%).



ORGANISATION'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA : Data indicates in table 2 that the primary objective of using social media is to Educate Patients/Consumers(52.14%) and Engage Patients/Consumers(48.72%). Many organizations use social media to Attract New Customers(47.86%) and Build Greater Brand Recognition(47.01%). Some of them said



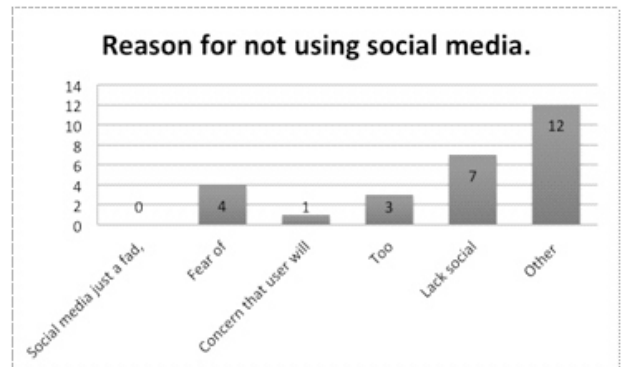
REASON FOR NOT USING SOCIAL MEDIA: This question was answered by Organizations who did not use Social Media at all and the reason for this was lack social media expertise(25.93%). Some of them have a fear of percent Fear of Negative comments(3.7%) whereas some Fear the liability/malpractice/



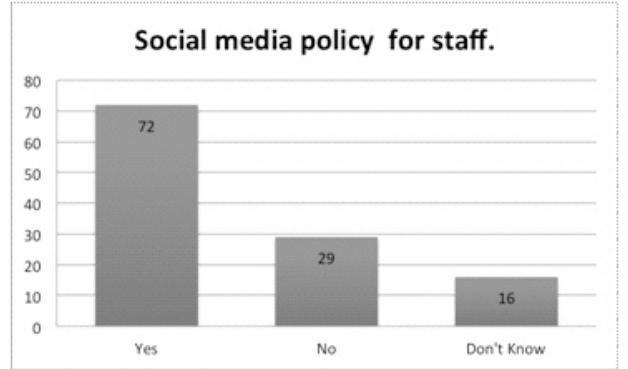
DEPARTMENTS THAT MANAGE SOCIAL MEDIA :The Table 6 shows that 62.39% percent Departments that manage Social Media in Healthcare Organization is Customer Care/Marketing/ Public Relation, 5.13percent is IT Department,1.71 percent is Clinic Department, 11.97 percent is Decentralized Across Many Department, 18.8 percent fall under the category of other who do not know about it.

that they had no idea why they were using social media at the first place.

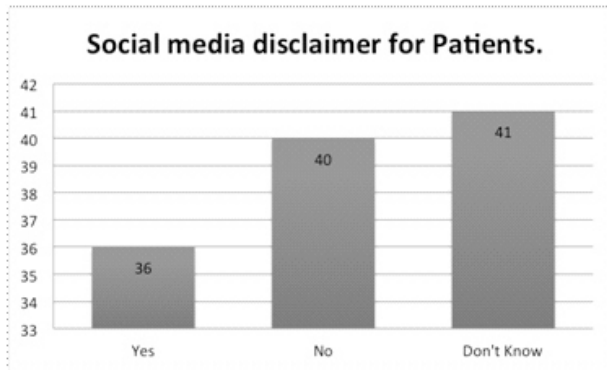
SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS : Data reveals in table 3 that most of the organizations are on Facebook(69.23%) followed by LinkedIn(60.68%), Twitter(55.56%) and YouTube(45.3%). Many of these organizations also write blogs regular basis(27.35%).



HIPPA/PHI concerns(14.81%). For some it is Too much work or it is extra work(11.11%). Many other gave other reasons saying that they either did not know about Social Media or they never tried it(44.44%). For some of the organizations, reason for not using Social Media is Lack of resources and Corporate Decision.



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR STAFF :The table 7 shows that 61.54 percent Healthcare Organization have Social Media Policy in place for their staff, 24.79 percent Healthcare Organization don't have Social Media Policy for their staff, rest of 14 percent Healthcare Organization Do not Know whether they have Social Media Policy or not. Majority 61.54 percent Healthcare Organization have Social Media Policy for their Staff.



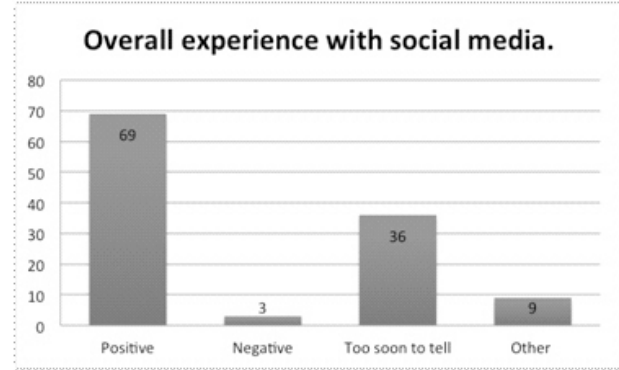
SOCIAL MEDIA DISCLAIMER FOR THEIR PATIENTS:The table 8 shows that 30.77 percent Healthcare Organization have Social Media Disclaimer for their Patients, 34.19 percent Healthcare Organization don't have Social Media Disclaimer for their Patients, rest of 35.04 percent Healthcare Organization Don't Know whether they have a Social Media Disclaimer. Majority 35.04 percent Healthcare Organization Don't Know about Social Media Disclaimer.

OVERALL EXPERIENCE :The table 8 shows that 58.97 percent Healthcare Organizations have Positive experience in Using Social Media. However 2.6 percent of them have Negative experience. Organizations who told that it was too soon to tell about their experience of Social Media were 30.77 percent. Rest of 7.69 percent expressed that they were not sure, had no comment etc. Majority, 58.77 percent Healthcare Organization have positive overall experience about Social Media.

CONCLUSION

As advance technology and online networking keep on expanding, medical providers and suppliers must adopt to meet the expectation and needs of the customers.

The results of this study confirm the thriving adoption, increased opportunities and cautious use of social media by healthcare organizations. Online networking is invading organizations more than ever before. Healthcare professional use this so does patients and online communities. Social media is also an extremely powerful tool to enhance patient satisfaction. It has now the impact on forming government



healthcare policies.

While some healthcare organizations have taken the initiative, numerous others are attempting to comprehend this new medium of opportunity. Implementing a social media policy is no longer an alternative now, it is a necessity. If healthcare organizations do not give a serious consideration in this direction, they run the danger of getting to be stagnant and maybe out of date over the long haul. After acquiring skills on how to handle social media, it is high time for healthcare organizations to utilize social networking in a more propelled manner to accomplish their key objectives and strategic goals.

There are certainly some dark areas, but preventable. The potential benefits present outweigh the risk and concerns associated with it. Nevertheless, social media presence will continue to grow into the future and the field of healthcare is no exception.

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Table 2. Purpose of using social media.						
Options	Marketing Services & Products	Brand Management	Distribution of Educational Information	Reputation Management (i.e. monitoring and responding to what is being said about you)	We Don't Use Social Media	Other
Respondent	90	67	76	50	11	8
Percentage	76.92%	57.26%	64.96%	42.74%	9.40%	6.84%

Table 3. Primary objectives in using social media.						
Options	Attract New Customers	Build Greater Brand Recognition	Educate Patients/Consumers	Engage Patients/Consumers	Don't Know	Other
Respondent	56	55	61	57	10	3
Percentage	42.86%	47.01%	52.14%	48.72%	8.55%	2.56%

Table 4. Social media tools being used.						
Options	Facebook	Twitter	Linkedin	Youtube	Blogs (i.e your organisation writes its own blog)	Other
Respondent	81	65	71	53	32	17
Percentage	69.23%	55.56%	60.68%	45.30%	27.35%	14.53%

Table 5. Reason for not using social media.						
Options	Social media just a fad, it's not worth bothering with	Fear of liability/malpractice/HIPPA/PHI concern	Concern that user will post negative comment about your organisation	Too much work	Lack social media expertise	Other
Respondent	0	4	1	3	7	12
Percentage	0.00%	14.81%	3.70%	11.11%	25.93%	44.44%

Table 6. Department(s) managing social media activities.					
Options	Customer Care/ Marketing/ Public relation	IT Department	Clinical Department	It is decentralized across many departments	Other
Respondent	0	4	1	3	12
Percentage	0.00%	14.81%	3.70%	11.11%	44.44%

Table 7. Social media policy for staff.			
Options	Yes	No	Don't Know
Respondent	72	29	16
Percentage	61.54%	24.79%	13.68%

Table 8. Social media disclaimer for Patients.			
Options	Yes	No	Don't Know
Respondent	36	40	41
Percentage	30.77%	34.19%	35.04%

Table 9. Overall experience with social media.				
Options	Positive	Negative	Too soon to tell	Other
Respondent	69	3	36	9
Percentage	58.97%	2.56%	30.77%	7.69%