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RESEARCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The integration of online SMPs not only has made research more exciting but also has increased the reach of investigators manifold. Social media platforms may evolve into useful tools to gather survey information from wider, although still often biased, audiences. Opinion-based surveys can be the first step toward an evidence base to guide more structured studies. The Global Rheumatology Alliance has rapidly generated comprehensive data amid widespread concerns over the use of immunosuppressants.

Artificial intelligence–mediated data-mining tools are being used to synthesize information out of social media discussions relevant to the pandemic. The use of geocoded and time-stamped tweets to develop prediction models in real time holds potential as a guiding resource for federal agencies, pending further validation. Social media can aid in containment of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well-planned analyses of online exchanges may provide for rapid assessment of the spread of the disease.

## LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA: POTENTIAL FOR MISINFORMATION

The greatest strength of SMPs is also their principal limitation. Because information is widely accessible and immediately available, it may also not be immediately reliable. Information constructs based on flawed hypotheses can easily find their way to a naive audience through an unregulated maze, resulting in the establishment of many myths before facts can be presented. Health care providers making clinical decisions need to be trained in quickly surfing through a haystack to find the needle.

Not only have the authors been caught in a rush to publish, but the journals have also been trapped. Consequently, established peer-review processes may be impaired, and low-quality studies may find their way into high-impact journals, gaining a wider, and undeserved, audience. Incivility and cyberbullying have been another bane of free social media access. Human psychology experiments have suggested that the knowledge of being monitored may restore cognitive self-awareness of asocial behavior. Thus, policing of social media posts may help pull the brakes on exaggerated intuitive and emotional responses. Although unethical promotion of scientific misinformation for economic gains amounts to serious professional misconduct, there is often no penalty. Lamentably, this pandemic has exposed our world to a series of threats, and moral failure may be one of the most damaging ones

## MEDICAL JOURNALS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Medical journals have evolved rapidly over the last few decades and have transformed into gatekeepers and possibly trendsetters for current research. As the newest frontier, social media holds exciting opportunities and unforeseen challenges for both authors and editors alike. However, with the advantage comes the responsibility of a much larger reach to the public.

Rheumatologists and Immunologists have found themselves uniquely endowed with viral pathogenic and therapeutic insights as well as the skill-set to manage a critical illness. The artistry of this jack-of-all-trades among physicians can find utility in identifying valid evidence. This would be the first step toward going through reams of scientific information with the intent to verify and subsequently curate and deliver it to the right audience. Academicians, in general, and social media editors (SMEs), in particular, can assume this more substantial role of infodemic warriors in these times of scientific and moral failure amid plenty.

To date, 17 rheumatology journals have SMEs and Twitter accounts.[1](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7437428/#bib1) Collaborative networks between official journal accounts can have a rapid and powerful social media presence with wide dissemination of credible information. Scientific societies at the local, national, and international levels can be approached to inform and direct subscribers to follow these networks. It might be prudent to embark on the challenging task of creating separate platforms for HCWs and patients to avoid mass panic from adverse scientific observations. This may be particularly important as social media may potentially be the invincible force soon.

The challenge and responsibility for an important role can incentivize SMEs toward handling the delicate synthesis of scientific literature on COVID-19 and correspondences on them. Creating alliances can reduce the burden on individual SMEs, whereas COVID-19 clinical duties keep them busy. Bots and automatic algorithms may come in handy for performing scheduled and unscheduled checks as well as sending reminders on the rules, including, but not limited to, forbidden personal opinions and biased statements on official platforms. For infographics and images, mandatory checks on copyright violations before circulation on social media could be the domain of SMEs. Lastly, didactic communication, such as journal clubs on Twitter, can facilitate crowd engagement on open-source platforms. These could be prioritized, hopefully replacing popular beliefs with definite answers. In such times, the academician community needs to come together for a powerful and credible social media presence.

In conclusion, social networks have become central to the rapid dissemination of scientific information and for administrative pandemic monitoring and control. Medical journals have promptly espoused online discussions, peer review, and scholarly collaboration to allow SMPs to attain a formidable medical research position despite initial limitations. In collaborative social media networks lies the potential to lead the way forward by delivering valid scientific observations in an organized manner to the appropriate audience.