Social media has become an increasingly popular method of communication.

Medical professionals’ use of platforms such as Facebook present potential issues with professionalism and protected patient information.

Hospitals and other healthcare-related businesses have adopted social media policies in an effort to avoid conflicts.

E-professionalism

- The ACGME mandates instruction and assessment in professionalism as part of residency training.
- “E-professionalism” is an additional facet of professionalism that pertains to behavior and communication in online settings.

The Statistics

- By late 2010, over 85% of all US adults between the ages of 18-29 years old were using social media sites. (Chretien et al., 2011; Osman & Wardle, 2011)
- Only 13 of 128 US medical schools surveyed had guidelines/policies easily accessible on the internet that explicitly mentioned social media. (Kind, 2010)
- >70% of medical student Facebook pages in one study had material that could be deemed “inappropriate”: excessive alcohol, overt sexuality, patient information. (Kind, 2010)
- 92% of state medical board directors reported at least one on-line professionalism violation in the past year. (McCartney, 2010)

Needs Assessment

- To examine the practices of Facebook use by a small group of pediatric attendings and residents at a large children’s hospital.
- To further delineate differences in social media use based on position (attending vs resident), sex (male vs female), or age (years of training or in practice).
- Development of an educational curriculum allowing for the integration of medical professionalism and online social media in medical training.
Do you view your Facebook posts as your “private” life?

**Resident responses:**
- Yes: 72%  No: 28%
- Male: Yes: 33%  No: 57%
- Female: Yes: 66%  No: 43%
  Level of training: not significant factor

**Attending responses:**
- Yes: 68%  No: 32%
- Male: Yes: 47%  No: 50%
- Female: Yes: 53%  No: 50%
  Level of training: not significant factor

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Are you identified as a physician or CCHMC employee on your Facebook page?

**Resident responses:**
- Physician: Yes: 80%  No: 20%
- CCHMC: Yes: 96%  No: 4%
  Level of training: not significant factor

**Attending responses:**
- Physician: Yes: 80%  No: 20%
- CCHMC: Yes: 92%  No: 8%
  Level of training: not significant factor

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As a resident, are you “friends” with any of your attendings/supervisors on Facebook?

**Resident responses:**
- Yes: 76%  No: 24%
- Male: Yes: 28%  No: 12%
- Female: Yes: 48%  No: 12%
  Level of training: “No” answers were all interns

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As an attending, are you “friends” with any of your residents on Facebook?

**Attending responses:**

- Yes: 64%  No: 36%
  - Male: Yes: 32%  No: 16%
  - Female: Yes: 32%  No: 20%
  - Level of training: not significant factor

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Is it ok for a college professor to “friend” his/her students on Facebook?

**Resident responses:**
- Yes: 52%  No: 48%
- Female: Yes: 28%  No: 32%
- Male: Yes: 24%  No: 16%
  Level of training: not significant factor

**Attending responses:**
- Yes: 44%  No: 56%
- Female: Yes: 24%  No: 28%
- Male: Yes: 20%  No: 28%
  Level of training: not significant factor

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Is it ok for a high school teacher to “friend” his/her students on Facebook?

**Resident responses:**
- Yes: 20%  No: 80%
- Female: Yes: 15%  No: 60%
- Male: Yes: 5%  No: 20%
  Level of training: not significant factor

**Attending responses:**
- Yes: 16%  No: 84%
- Female: Yes: 0  No: 65%
- Male: Yes: 16%  No: 19%
  Level of training: not significant factor
Are you familiar with CCHMC’s Social Media policy?

“I know it exists.”
- Resident responses:
  - Yes: 32%  No: 68%
- Attending responses:
  - Yes: 82%  No: 18%

“I have read it.”
- Resident responses:
  - Yes: 16%  No: 84%
- Attending responses:
  - Yes: 35%  No: 65%

Interesting Findings

- Facebook usage is extremely widespread at CCHMC, much more than percentages quoted in recent literature (Osman, 2011)
- Nearly 96% of residents and 89% of attendings approached for this study used Facebook.
- Nearly all participants (72% residents, 68% attendings) classified their Facebook page as their “private life”.
- Nearly all participants (94%) identified themselves as CCHMC employees and most also as physicians (80%).
- The majority of attendings and residents were not familiar with the details of the CCHMC Social Media Policy.

Sample Workshop Agenda

Hour 1:
- Review Needs Assessment results
- Review and discuss CCHMC Social Media policy and AMA Social Media policy
  - Large group discussion
- Hour 2:
  - Review of sample Facebook posts and media stories about social media faux pas
  - Facilitated case and small group discussions
  - Review of social media sites for professionals
  - Large/small group discussion and exploration of sites

CCHMC Social Media Policy Excerpts

- 4.2.2. Use good judgment and take responsibility. Understand that information published on Social Media platforms is public, permanent, immediately searchable and can be immediately shared.
  - As soon as information is shared on Social Media platforms, it leaves your control forever.
  - Strive for accuracy in your communications. Errors, inaccuracies and omissions can reflect poorly on CCHMC and may affect your employment or expose you, personally, to liability.
  - You are responsible for the material you post on Social Media.

CCHMC Social Media Policy Excerpts

- 4.2.3. Be respectful and professional.
  - Be courteous, respectful, and thoughtful about how others may perceive or be affected by postings.
  - Incomplete, inaccurate, inappropriate, inflammatory, threatening, harassing, or poorly worded postings may be harmful to others. They may damage relationships, discourage teamwork, and negatively impact CCHMC’s reputation.

CCHMC Social Media Policy Excerpts

- 4.2.3. Be respectful and professional.
  - Do not engage in conduct that would not be acceptable at CCHMC.
  - Show consideration for the privacy of others and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
  - Uses of Social Media that are obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to another person or entity are prohibited.
CCHMC Social Media Policy Excerpts

4.2.4. **Speak for yourself.**

Unless you are using CCHMC-hosted Social Media as part of your job, do not do anything that might create the impression that you are communicating on behalf or as a representative of CCHMC.

Where your connection to CCHMC is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking personally and not on behalf of CCHMC, a disclaimer such as, "The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer," may be appropriate.

AMA 2010 Policy On Professionalism In The Use Of Social Media

- Doctors should separate professional and personal content online
- Must recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputations among patients and colleagues
- May have consequences for their medical careers (particularly for physicians in training and medical students)
- Can undermine public trust in the medical profession.  
  McCartney, 2012

Sample Resident Posts**

("Altered Slightly To Protect Their "Privacy")

- "Residency really is the worst thing that has ever happened to me. Maybe if someone in the program cared about my personal time or my life, it would be better!"
- "After multiple futile attempts to sleep, I am right floot tonight with 2 hours of sleep in the past 24 hours plus. Watch out!"
- "After tonight I am firmly convinced that there either needs to be mandatory sterilization for degenerate parents OR a licensing process to have children. There are some people who should not be allowed to have or to keep their children."
- "I love it when a 36 hour day starts off with a crazy bitch mom yelling at you on rounds and scaring the surrounding children with her obscenities."
- "Only parents with a death wish should take their children to _______ hospital."

You Can Decide for Yourself If Any of these Posts Violate CCHMC Policy

Our Advice To The Residents:

- If you post anything about work, assume that EVERYONE can see it forever!
- Don't post anything that you would not want your program directors or your mother to read.
- If you need to complain or use some of that sarcastic humor that can be so therapeutic, do it behind closed doors and not on-line.
- Be cognizant of the types of photos you post of yourself and those that others are posting of you.

Social Media Sites For Medical Professionals

- Remember to also communicate the "good side" of social media—education, networking, etc.
- LinkedIn: [http://www.linkedin.com/](http://www.linkedin.com/)
- Doximity: [https://www.doximity.com/index1](https://www.doximity.com/index1)
- Medicalmingle: [http://www.medicalmingle.com](http://www.medicalmingle.com)
- QuantiaMD: [https://secure.quantiamd.com](https://secure.quantiamd.com)
- Doc2doc: [http://doc2doc.bmj.com/](http://doc2doc.bmj.com/)

When you have nothing to do, do it on Facebook
References