

Online Discussions about Dysphagia Research: What Key Themes Can Be Identified in Twitter Journal Club Conversations

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Abstract

This poster presents key features of online discussions about published dysphagia research in a Twitter based journal club in the past year. These monthly one-hour Twitter chats are based on open access papers, where the hosts have previously written a blog post summary of the research design and key findings of the paper. The chats are structured around pre-set questions to provide a light-touch guided appraisal of the research, plus eliciting participants' experiences from their respective practice settings. The analysis presented here focused on discussions of two papers specifically related to dysphagia. Analysis of the Twitter transcripts, web analytics and soft intelligence feedback revealed participant demographics and a range of interaction functions – including sharing advice from experienced practitioners and academics. Participants were at various career stages and included one of the papers authors. It was evident that geography was no barrier, with international participation on both dates. A range of professions joined the discussions; reflecting real-world practice contexts and enhancing the multi-professional dimensions of the learning experience. Participants' comments demonstrated the prevalence of common challenges in dysphagia practice – across clinical populations, care settings, and national boundaries. Examples of current practices were shared, as well as advice and links for further relevant resources and research information. These findings provide indicative insights into how online communities can effectively support continuing professional development and improve quality in clinical services, by promoting implementation of research into practice. This credible forum raised highly pertinent issues related to global advocacy for dysphagia services and future research priorities.

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