

Editorial re: WhatsApp in neurosurgery: the best practice is in our hands

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Received: 2 August 2016 / Accepted: 4 August 2016 / Published online: 20 September 2016
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I think this letter to the editor does not necessarily merit an additional extensive comment. That is because many people are using WhatsApp already for the same purpose—including our team and many others I know of—because this also allows transmitting videos of imaging series.

Then, what is so special about it? It is modern-times communication, and people are using it. I do not think there were scientific articles on the use of mobile phones by doctors on call instead of simple beepers in the 1990s or articles about the use of email with attachments as scientific proof of improvement in patient management.

In fact, the use of such technology enables not only reducing the time until decisions can be made, but also facilitates the life of the involved surgeons as well.

Key is, as with other (open source and sender) software tools, the security of data transmission. Despite all widespread

use, availability and accessibility, we should not forget that we have to act in the interest of our patients. And a big part of that interest should be devoted to keeping their personal information confidential, because the currency in which patients are paying for our services is their trust. In light of the current developments in social media, a substantial and unprecedented loss of privacy can be observed, which may have tardive repercussions on everybody's lives. This seems underestimated by the current young generation, who are giving much of themselves away to a diffuse public and to IT molochs, i.e., via Facebook.

In using such tools as described by the authors, it is our responsibility to make sure that nobody else will have access to the confidential information about patients that is shared between doctors. I hope that the need for such easy ways to communicate and exchange will also trigger the development of respective security measures by the software industry.

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