The Journal and Social Media

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Neurocritical Care has social reach. It may seem that there is a breakdown of journals into articles, papers are easily traceable, and even figures are shared. This creates a metric, and next to the impact factor, altmetrics have positioned itself as a social Web-based tool that analyzes social traffic among journal readers. Altmetrics are an aggregate of multiple data sources derived mostly from news stories, tweets, Facebook pages, blog posts, and Mendeley readers. But altmetrics are currently a major source of discussion among journal editors, who may question their reliability and the alleged connection between altmetrics and citation statistics. The precision of measuring research impact with altmetrics is not known and intuitively low. In a broader sense, altmetrics measure immediacy and attention for the article as well as non-academic engagement. Hearsay suggests that authors use the altmetric scores to show a broader impact and justify grant funding. None of this is substantiated. Social media uses many traditional ways to show that provocative articles get more attention and are more likely to go viral. If altmetrics showed a strong correlation with article citation, such attention on social media cites could potentially affect the impact factor. Joining and using Twitter could potentially contribute to improvement in the impact factor. However, even if correlation is clear, cause and effect is not. The *Journal* recognizes the opportunity to share interesting and exceptional articles via social media. On the *Journal*'s Web site, you will find the altmetric score—if

there is one—in the circle next to the number of citations and under the rubric “shares.” Opening up the link provides the reader with more data on sources.

And then there is Twitter. Twitter is an underused means of journal communication, with about a third of medical journals hosting a profile. Generally, Twitter users post messages, about 140 characters in length, and use hashtags (words or phrases prefixed with a “#” sign) to highlight a discussion topic, which may reveal an attitude or opinion the author attaches to the tweet. Messages can be “retweeted,” or reposted to a wide audience and often very rapidly. Users can also “favorite” a tweet, indicating approval.

For the neurointensivist trying to keep up with neurocritical care literature, Twitter can be an important curator of articles, saving time for literature reviews. In mid-2016, we opened up a *Journal* Twitter account (@NeurocritCareJ), and the number of followers is rapidly growing. This supplements the *Neurocritical Care* Twitter Journal Club led by Aarti Sarwal. The *Journal* selects articles for tweets differently than other journals, which tweet out any article posted online. The journal tweets are only about the journal but may involve press releases of papers, notable editorials, or other comments published online and slated for an upcoming issue. The journal does not retweet postings from other journals or personal accounts. The journal does not use hashtags and will stay professional in all postings. We encourage authors to link their work to a social media account and inform their personal followers.

An example of *Neurocritical Care Journal* tweets is shown in Fig. 1. We can expect that traditional systems may eventually become overshadowed by multiple other article metric tools such as ALM PLoS, which covers papers from PLoS; ImpactStory, which covers all the

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Fig. 1 *Neurocritical Care* Twitter page

research products such as PLoS, PubMed, SlideShare, and YouTube; and Plum Analytics covering journal articles, books, videos, presentations, conference proceedings, datasets, and other sources.

Medical journals have started to use Twitter as a means to disseminate new research, to increase readership, and to interact with readers. Twitter is a tremendous new tool for journals, but we do not know whether there is a correlation between actual reading of an article and Twitter activity. Also, no conclusions can be drawn from articles with altmetrics scores of 0. I have identified papers with a good number of citations and low altmetric scores. Moreover, altmetric scores are biased toward manuscripts in open-access journals, which are freely available on the Web.

Seeing Twitter activity on the *Neurocritical Care* Web site and on the *Journal Twitter* handle gives us a good opportunity to spread the information fast. We like to be part of the “academic buzz.” Springer has designated persons for content-acquisition marketing and author marketing. Thera Farina, D. M. Diem, and Sarah Garfunkel track mentions on Twitter, CiteULike, Mendeley, academic blogs, news outlets, and Wikipedia. Please join us on our Twitter account. You can be part of the buzz too.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest Dr. Wijdicks reports no disclosures relevant to this paper.