Students' Perspective on "Engagement with Question-Type Facebook Posts"

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Dear editor,

We would like to thank Quesnelle et al. [1] for their article regarding engagement with question-type Facebook posts. Currently, Imperial College London does not engage with students via social media, instead it uses "Blackboard Learn" or email communications, as such we felt it appropriate to share our opinions on the topic.

As students, we like to ask questions and get an instant response and agree wholeheartedly that the "fast paced, 'always accessible'" nature of social media makes it an asset [1]. However, the openness may lead to students feeling pressured to agree with friends and peers as it can be traced back to them or to prevent conflict. Using a platform that anonymises students may lead to increased honesty and allow more students to participate, whilst also reducing the effects of groupthink and conformity in online discussions. The public availability of the pages could also lead to concerns over privacy and confidentiality.

We question the viability of using Facebook in the future. Only 51% of teenagers currently use Facebook, which has fallen from 71% in 2015 [2]. Websites like Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube have risen to overtake Facebook as the leading social networks. If Facebook is used in the future, this could mean that nearly half of new students would miss out on educational content, whereas all university students are given a university email address on admission making it a much more accessible way of distributing questions, facts and supplemental information.

Lastly, this study fails to investigate the impact of Facebook engagement on education. With increased engagement, the question then arises whether this correlates with improved exam results or better clinical knowledge. Azizi et al. concluded that there was a *significant negative correlation* between use of social networks and academic performance [3]. They argue that universities should take interventional steps to help students spending too much time on social media, such as Facebook. Should this be the case, it may be worthwhile researching other ways, such as YouTube videos, to engage medical students [4].

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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