

Cancer on Twitter

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Editorial

The way we communicate and receive information increases in speed and mode each year. Beginning with emails in the 1990s to the use of text messages and then using the Twitter, has revolutionized our communication. Communication tools like, Twitter has improved our links to timely information and keeps us connected and informed on topics of interest in a real time. With the rapid development and availability of innovative information on the diagnosis, management, and care of our patients, new communication technology such as Twitter has never been so important.

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting is probably one of the largest meetings held and attended by researchers and physicians from around the world. No doubt that Twitter is not effectively used to announce news from the meeting to attendees and interested subscribers in real-time but there is a continuous stream of updates by attendees to give their followers an instant access to abstracts, video clips, presentations and their commentary. These instant updates often provide users with the option to link to additional information. Moreover, ASCO also uses this technology successfully throughout the Annual Meeting by providing subscribers headlines with links to full abstracts on new oncology developments and cancer clinical trial outcomes.

Twitter is often described as a microblog and its required brevity of the messages excludes lengthy conversation. The option of creating disease-specific physician groups has transformed the way we network with our colleagues and significantly enhance collaboration on research and clinical care. Twitter has also established a new platform for physicians to build a relationship and helps to build new collaborations and even job hunting.

With every technology's blessings, there comes a price. Sometimes the twitter communication could be biased and the responsibility lies on the shoulder of the follower to confirm. Similarly, each individual is encouraged to leave a disclaimer that the opinions is theirs and not represent their institution or set a recommendation to prevent any legal implications. In simple, the responsibility of our civics duties has to prevail with these microblogs.

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