

The Analysis of Articles in A Medical Blog: A Retrospective Study

Bir Medikal Blog Sitesindeki Yazıların Analizi: Retrospektif Çalışma

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ABSTRACT

Medical blogs are very popular means in terms of sharing information and experience on a given subject. EMAT[®] Toxicology working group has been publishing toxicology blog. This article is a retrospective research on the publishments of the blog in terms of readers' habits. The results are presented in a qualitative manner. All together; data is about 75 blog articles and posts that have been published for 481 days. Our results suggest that the blog posts which are about current popular public health issues are read more than classical management of the patients.

Keywords: Blog, Medicine Education, EMAT, Toxicology

ÖZET

Tıp blogları belirli bir konu hakkında bilgiyi ve deneyimi paylaşmak için popüler yöntemlerdir. TATD[®]Toksikoloji çalışma grubu toksikoloji bloğu yayınlamaktadır. Bu makale okurların okuma alışkanlıklarını göz önüne alarak blogda yayınlanmış yazıların retrospektif araştırmasıdır. Sonuçlar kalitatif olarak sunulmuştur. Tümüne bakıldığında 481 gün boyunca yayınlanmış 75 blog makalesi ve postası mevcuttur. Sonuçlarımıza göre popüler halk sağlığı ile ilgili konularda yazılan blog yazıları klasik hasta tedavisi hakkındaki yazılardan daha fazla okunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Blog, Tıp Eğitimi, TATD, Toksikoloji

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Introduction

A blog is a website that supports informal and conversational dialogue on a variety of topics. In medicine, blogs are used for ongoing education and exchange of information between different levels of media for different purposes. Blogs can be used for data exchange, scheduling education programs, storing contact information in order to process a data pool, or providing up-to-date information on program events. A blog can facilitate collaboration and idea dissemination; readers share their experiences on different topics, discuss difficult cases, and provide updates in everyday practice. Blogs are useful in terms of encouraging further study on selected topics. Medical blogs are significant in terms of interactive learning, discussing differential diagnosis, promoting collaboration, and critical thinking. Toxicology blogs are thousands in number with different levels of information about toxins which may be abundant or rare in the environment. Most of the blogs are about primary management of the poisoned people. Information about toxins for medical professionals is also easily achieved by these blogs (1-3)

EMAT-Toxicology working group is an official branch of the Emergency Medicine Association in Turkey. The major aim of this group is to create a media to exchange information about toxicology among the Emergency Medicine Physicians. One of the activities of the group is to publish an online blog "www.tatdtoksikoloji.org" which is dedicated to share new research in toxicology, to discuss difficult cases that are assumed to be poisoned by various poisons, and to improve management of poisoned patients. Since March 24-2017, there are 75 different articles published that are serving the mentioned purposes of the group. The aim of this article is to analyze the reading statistics of the blog so that the future planning of the blog can be made accordingly. Our primary purpose is to find out any existing difference in reading statistics between blog posts and blog articles.

Materials and Method

In this retrospective study, we analyzed the blog articles and posts since the day the blog started. This study is designed as the descriptive analysis of the reading statistics of the toxicology blog.

Results

There are 75 blog posts and articles published since March 24-2017, during past 481 days. The total reading number is 44,806. The mean reading is 93.15 per/day. The most preferred visiting method for the visitors was directly entering the web site. Twenty most visited posts in the blog and the total number of visits since the first day of the publication are presented in Table 1. Twenty most visited posts in the blog on daily basis, average number of daily visits and publication times are presented in table 2. Since the duration of publication is variable Table 1 is modified as readings per day, and there is the distribution of visits per day in Table 2.

Discussion

The most important purpose of medicine blogs is to increase the awareness and education levels on a designed topic. Toxicology blogs are followed by professionals from different specialties because most of the poisoning cases necessitate collaboration of different medicine fields such as emergency medicine, public health, intensive care, forensic sciences, internal medicine, etc. Our blog has been followed up by different specialists in addition to Pharmacists, Chemical engineers, and Medical Students.

The most read article with the title "Novichok: New Shocking News in Toxicology" was really a great success because at the time of publishment there was a lot of worldwide conspiracy news about a spy being killed by this drug. The readers were interested in that popular hot topic. The second most read article "Digoxin Poisoning: A Challenging Case" was about the challenges of digoxin therapy which we practice every day in the treatment although it is a very well- defined therapeutic regimen. "A Methemoglobinemia Case Who Presented to ER with Syncope" was about another difficult poisoning case which was published afterwards as a case report in "Turkish Journal of Emergency Medicine". All of these blog articles were actually long unlike regular blog posts. Although there is a common misbelief that the longer the blog essays are, the lesser they are read, our blog articles are read without a specific correlation with the length. The least visited 3 articles were "Albumin hemodialysis treatment in protein binding toxin poisonings", "Pyrethrin and pyrethroid insecticides" and "Convulsion due to hyperbaric oxygen treatment" with 71, 95 and 126 total visits, respectively.

Table 1. Twenty Most Visited Posts in the blog. The total number of visits consists of the reading numbers since the first day of the publication

Title	Total Visits (n)
Novichok: New Shocking News in Toxicology	2723
Digoxin Poisoning: A Challenging Case	2014
A Methemoglobinemia Case Who Presented to ER with Syncope	2003
Styrene Intoxication	1761
The Use of N-Acetylcysteine is not Limited to Paracetamol Poisoning	1616
Hydrogen Sulfide Intoxications	1569
Flakka: The Story of a Synthetic Cathinone	1482
Poisonous Plants: When Oleander (Nerium Oleander) is Chewed	1205
Cocaine Poisoning and Unopposed Alpha Adrenergic Stimulation Phenomenon 1	1180
Kratom	1086
Guidelines to Identify the Chemical Agents and Their Classifications	1007
Diagnosis and Management of Caffeine Intoxication: An Update	997
Toxicology PhD Programs	996
Effects of Nerve Gases and Their Management	896
Mushroom Poisonings: Part 1	895
Scombroid Poisoning	810
Mushroom Poisonings: Part 2	749
5 Questions 1 Case: What is Methyl Ethyl Ketone Peroxide (MEKP)?	713
A General Approach to Warfarin Intoxication	668
5 Questions 1 Case: Lithium Intoxication	666

When we consider the most visited articles on the daily basis, "Albumin Hemodialysis Method in Intoxications with Protein Binding Toxins" is the most read article. The reason we figured out the daily visits was that the total period of publishing for older articles was longer and the total number of reading of these articles would be independently longer than the newer publications. "Novichok: New Shocking News in Toxicology" was second in the order of the readings on daily basis. This article is still being read by our followers. The third most daily visited article is "The Role of Renal Replacement Therapy in Drug Related Intoxications". These articles were long publications, and they were written about advanced topics of toxicology. The least visited 3 articles on the daily basis were "5 Questions 1 Case: TCA Intoxication", "The Role of Extracorporeal Treatments in Methanol Intoxications" and "The Drug and Car Accident Relation; A Debate in Clinical Toxicology" with 0.74, 0.79 and 0.81 daily visits, respectively.

Medical blogs can be assumed to be popular if they are followed by the readers without losing their interest in the topics. An ideal blog post shares the author's opinion on a subject with an intense focus; whereas a blog article is written in an objective manner about a hot topic (2,4,5). The length of a blog post is usually less than 400 words. The spelling and the grammar should be impeccable; so that the publications can be easily understood. In our blog, an experienced group of editors are working as a team in order to monitor these publications. In asynchronous medical education, both blog writing and reading are recommended tools (6).

When this blog was first started; the major aim was to give information about poisonings and standardize the management of the patients. The results; however, showed us that the readers were more interested in more popular hot topics than the management protocols of the patients. "Table 1" shows that 8 of the 20 most read articles were about the general management of the poisoned victims whereas "Table 2" shows that 4 of the most read 20 articles per publication days were about the general management of the poisoned victims. These numbers suggest us that the classical information is achievable via textbooks and literature, and the blog readers are looking for further discussion and comments on the literature.

The number of visitors of this blog have increased over time and this seems to be a limitation since the number of visits of this blog's articles may have changed due to the number of increased number of visitors.

Finally, it should be noted that there may be diverse topics in the blog publications. A topic discussed in favor may be discussed in opposition in different blog articles. These pro- and con- activities in a blog provide interest and curiosity of the reader and a long-term sustainability. The variety of health issues discussed in any blog helps readers to think critically about the issues and prepare them for future scenarios (6,7). The free access education is an important tool for public health issues, and this is one of the reasons why blogs should be supported.

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Table 2. Twenty Most Visited Posts on Daily Basis. The total number of visits is divided by the total number of days of publication time.

Title	Average Daily Visits (n)	Publication Time (days, n)
Albumin Hemodialysis Method in Intoxications with Protein Binding Toxins	23,67	3
Novichok: New Shocking News in Toxicology	23,47	116
The Role of Renal Replacement Therapy in Drug Related Intoxications	16,00	12
Cocaine Poisoning and Unopposed Alpha Adrenergic Stimulation Phenomenon 1	14,94	79
Cardiotoxicity Due to Chronic Drug Use	14,93	42
Kratom	10,97	99
A Methemoglobinemia Case Who Presented to ER with Syncope	10,27	195
Toxic Substance Investigation: Starting from Palytoxin	7,95	58
Poisonous Plants: When Oleander (Nerium Oleander) is Chewed	7,44	162
Cocaine Poisoning and Unopposed Alpha Adrenergic Stimulation Phenomenon 2	7,37	54
Digoxin Poisoning: A Challenging Case	5,84	345
Flakka: The Story of a Synthetic Cathinone	5,29	280
Drugs Causing Bone Myelosuppression	4,88	51
Insecticides: Pyrethrins and Pyrethroids	4,52	21
Antihistamine Drug Poisonings - Part 1: Non-Sedatives	4,46	37
Mushroom Poisonings: Part 1	4,45	201
Convulsion After Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy	4,34	29
Styrene Intoxication	4,33	407
History can be Deceptive in Metformin Poisoning: Rely on the Biochemistry Lab	4,08	105
Hydrogen Sulfide Intoxications	4,01	391

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