

Social Networking for Clinicians

Web 2.0 has changed medicine by bringing physicians together in a more dynamic and an interactive platform. The Web 2.0 tools used by physicians in daily use include: blogs, RSS feeds, wiki's, podcasts, sharing software, social networking websites etc.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL NETWORK?

A social network is a social structure made of individuals who are related to each other by a common feature like profession, idea or vision. Advantages of joining a social network website for clinicians would include meeting fellow physicians with common interests and allowing free flow of ideas and exchanging medical knowledge. This could also help in personal marketing and finding a business partner. Social networking has been classically popularized by websites like **Myspace** (<http://www.myspace.com/>), **Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com/>) and **Orkut** (<http://www.orkut.com/>).

SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR CLINICIANS

By using a social networking website, physicians exchange observations and knowledge with each other in real time; gain insights from colleagues as they happen instead of waiting to read about them through conventional much slower sources; discuss about new clinical findings, and work together to impact patient care.

Sermo (<http://www.sermo.com/>) is the most widely used social network with a membership of 50,000 physicians, is now the official 'MySpace' for American Medical Association.

Some other social networks include

DoctorHangout (<http://www.doctorshangout.com/>);

Student Doctor Network (<http://forums.studentdoctor.net/>);

Doctor Networking (<http://doctornetworking.com/>);

Relax Doc (<http://relaxdoc.com/>);

Social MD (<http://socialmd.com/>);

Clinical Village (<http://clinicalvillage.com/>);

MedicSpeak (<http://www.medicspeak.com/>); and

radRounds (<http://www.radrounds.com/>)—A radiologists community.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Facebook is planning to transform networking on the web from a largely social, recreational activity to one that has serious implications for business and medical purposes. There is a need for Pediatricians to have a common platform to discuss their ideas. As we move towards more pediatric specialties, more social networking websites will find our way.

Comments are welcome if you feel that a network for your pediatric specialty should be formed.

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