The potential of social media and nursing education: E-professionalism, nurse educator–learner role, benefits and risks

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Abstract

In the 21st century, continuous and evolving complex treatment needs required health professionals to be educated about using social media for their ethical and legal responsibilities that are more influenced. So, the learners should be adapting to become power users of education and demand up-to-date interesting models of teaching by using social media to encourage dialogue and self-efficacy. Using social media tools, such as Blogs, Twitter, Wikis, Facebook and YouTube in nursing education develops critical reflection skills, promotes life-long learning and supports decision-making skills. While the risks raise privacy concerns regarding the interactions among learners and between learners and educators. Hence, nurse educators and learners must be aware of e-professionalism when using social media, and how to separate their personal and professional life to communicate with peers, patients, family and friends. In this context, this paper reviews how social media impacts on nursing education, and the vital role of nurse educators and learner.

Keywords: Nursing education, social media, e-professionalism, benefits of social media, risks of social media.

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1. Introduction

Today's, being in times of fast-paced technological change which is changing the nature of the social practice, and life, the traditional model of higher education remains driven by the passive lecture that shifting with students becoming powerful users of education and demanding up-to-date interactive and interesting models of teaching by using social media technology as a teaching and learning tool, which enhances interaction and collaboration, information and resource sharing and develops skills in critical reflection between educators and students (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008; Mason, 2006). In addition, it encourages dialogue, promotes motivation and self-efficacy to further learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

In the health care area, communication and information as using innovative technology and virtual platforms have an essential role to play in the relationship between professionals and the general public in order to continuously and rapidly evolve complex treatment needs (Vanzetta, Vellone, Dal Molin, Martellotti & Alvaro, 2013), through respecting the public's right to information and promoting personal growth accessible by using quality, accurate, targeted and reliable information. So, that requires health professionals to be educated about using various social media tools, for their ethical and legal responsibilities are more influenced (Jones & Hayter, 2013; Lachman, 2013; Milton, 2014). These tools improve professional networking and education, share information, debate health care policy and practice issues, promote health behaviours, engage with the public, increase personal awareness of news and discoveries and educate and interact with patients, caregivers, students and colleagues (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, 2012; Bernhardt Alber & Gold, 2014; Fogelson Rubin & Ault, 2013; Moorhead et al., 2013)

Today, many nursing professions and health organisations successfully use the Internet and social media to extend their services essentially, which include educational programmes, community health networking groups, health resources and information regarding best practice (Barry & Hardiker, 2012; Bickhoff, 2014; Douglas, 2014; Peate, 2013); in order to care for patients in various clinical settings and support rules and logic to guide clinical decision-making (Barry & Hardiker, 2012; Jones & Hayter, 2013; Milton, 2014; Lachman, 2013). In nursing practice, many nurses were careful about using social media (Nakhasi et al., 2018) and how they should be used. So, it is important to gain a deep understanding of these tools and of their potential risks to avoid inappropriate use of them (Vanzetta et al., 2013). In nursing education, according to the National League for Nursing (2011), more than 80% of nursing learners are Millennials who see technology as a part of their everyday life (Peck, 2014). Thus, learners require innovative ways for self-expression and information sharing throughout the learning process (Buzzetto-More, 2012). So, educators are faced with the challenge to use technology to better achieve different learning styles and engage the learners (Bassell, 2010; Green & Hope, 2010; Roberts, Newman & Schwartzstein, 2012; Roland, Johnson & Swain, 2011; Whitty & Anane, 2014). In addition, there is the concern of whether nursing educators and learners are aware of appropriate use, as it can benefit or limit one's professional image (Jain et al., 2014; Kind, Patel, Lie & Chretien, 2014).

2. Social media in nursing education

Social media is defined as the set of Internet-based tools that help a user (individuals and communities) to connect, collaborate and communicate with others in real time (Ressler & Glazer, 2011), and to create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, images and other content (Social Media Defined, 2009, July 8). Furthermore, social media provides a supportive environment that encourages and facilitates peer learning that enhances meaningful learning by encouraging learners to work together, develop critical reflection skills, articulate knowledge and manages to learn (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001). Consequently, it makes learners take responsibility for their own learning by giving and receiving feedback to and from other learners (Keppel, Au, Ma & Chan, 2006); as well as it promotes life-long learning (Tan, 2003) and enhances students' self-efficacy

by providing a sense of mastery and social modelling and informing learners' psychological responses (Bandura, 1977) where that occurs in an environment of trust, mutuality and closeness (Eisen, 2000). Hence, in nursing education, technology usage is widely encouraged (Herrman, 2011) through adapting it to include the use of simulation, gaming, virtual reality and interactive case studies that can teach acute care in a safe learning environment. Thus, the traditional student of nursing adapts easily to learning activities utilizing technology (Pardue & Morgan, 2008). On the other hand, The National Council of State Boards of Nursing-NCSBN (2011) issued the White Paper: A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media, which states social media has the potential to positively impact health care in multiple ways, including providing education and information to both health care providers and consumers, increasing the speed of communication with patients and developing professional networks. Social media is considered vital in nursing education, it helps learners develop a better understanding of professionalism and ethics, it develops communication and social skills among learners and also between learners and educators relevant to nursing (Barry & Hardiker, 2012; Moule, Ward & Lockyer, 2010; Schmitt, Sims Giddens & Booth, 2012); moreover, when learners get familiar with social media and teaching methods developed, problems have been solved (Moule, Ward & Lockyer, 2010), increases learners responsibility, enables independent work and promotes decision-making skills that are emphasised in nursing and for which social media tools provide opportunities (Anderson & Puckrin, 2011; Barry & Hardiker, 2012).

There are various social media applications that are used as teaching methods in nursing education when students doing their practice periods in hospital or school, which increase the student-centred option (Kohtz, Gowda, Stockert, White & Kennel, 2012; Schmitt et al., 2012), such as Blogs, which provide a mean for online discussions and encourages collaboration among students by promoting discussion of course content outside of the classroom, thus allowing students to become more engaged with each other in the learning process through responding to blog posts (Arbour, Kaspar & Teall, 2015; Grassley & Bartoletti, 2009). While, twitter promotes active learning, supports reflection and higher levels of thinking and also promotes interactions among students and between students and faculty, it enhances the clinical decision-making skills of nursing students in critical care situations. In addition, students can view videos of clinical scenarios and tweet their observations on the patient's evolving condition for instructor feedback (Mistry, 2011). Also, there is wikis, enhances students' collaboration that developed by teams of nursing students such as nursing care plans, evidence-based nursing care projects or group developed scholarly papers (Grassley & Bartoletti, 2009). While, Facebook integrated as an educational tool into nursing courses to increase the fidelity, or realism, of case studies or simulations, it provides academics with a present and innovative means of communicating with students to promote student learning through discussions and photo or video sharing (Mazman & Usluel, 2010), it provides students the opportunity to autonomously direct, self-evaluate and self-reinforce behaviour that supports their learning (Bandura, 1977; Kuiper, Pesut & Kautz, 2009). In addition, there is YouTube, which provides various patient case studies and educational videos that can be used in the classroom to promote student engagement through active learning, critical thinking and application of knowledge, it allows learners to engage with the content verbally and visually (Clifton & Mann, 2011). On the other hand, there are new computer-based applications designed to encourage educational process applied to education and particularly using Internet allows the formulation of interactive self-assessment tests that can be valuable tools to motivate students in learning tasks and to test their progress previously to be certainly examined (Miguelanez, 2009; Mogey & Watt, 1996) as Quizzes and Kahoot. In addition, it can do assessment of learning process, which is considered an essential part of the educational practice, and allows the achievement of learning objectives by learners and enhancing the quality and efficacy of teaching practice that impact on instructional needs and curricula (Gallego, 2006)

3. E-professionalism

Today, professionalism in nursing practice joins with the increased use of social media and public platforms (Greyson et al., 2010). As a result, nursing students and educators must be aware of e-professionalism when using social media that is defined as the attitudes and behaviours reflecting traditional professionalism paradigms that are shown through digital media (Cain & Romanelli, 2009). On the other hand, e-professionalism concept is used to define the legal and ethical implications of using social media by health professionals. So, nurses must understand how to separate their personal and professional life when using the Internet and social media to communicate with peers, patients, family, friends and colleagues; and in nursing school, should educate learners on the nursing Code of Ethics and understand the role that e-professionalism plays in their nursing profession (Cain & Romanelli, 2009).

E-professionalism is considered a concern for educators and learners. So, there is the importance of educator modelling e-professionalism with learners in relation to social media use (Cain & Romanelli, 2009) that begins with an awareness of current knowledge surrounding social media use in nurse education, e-professionalism and suitable use of privacy features to ensure that professional standards of nursing care are maintained, with stress on the need for protection of student privacy and the need for education on learners professional conduct and confidentiality while using social media (Peck, 2014). For all of these reasons, the American Nurses Association-ANA (2011) set principles for 'Social Networking and the Nurse', as nurses should not transmit or place online patient information; they should observe ethically guided professional patient-nurse boundaries; they should understand patients, co-workers, institutions and employers may view postings; they should take advantage of privacy settings and try to separate personal and professional information online; they should make content that could harm a patient's privacy, rights or welfare to the attention of the appropriate authorities; and they should participate in developing institutional policies governing online conduct.

4. Role of nurse educator–learner in social media

The learners now joining halls of higher education are digital natives who grew up in a multimedia world and are most comfortable with technology (Skiba, 2007), they are using social media to seek and share information and to communicate both personally and professionally with others (Baggett & Williams, 2012; Kim, Yoo-Lee & Joanna Sin, 2011). Also, there are learners who used social media types combined with more traditional forms of education (Hrastinski & Aghaee, 2012); all of these uses for social media assist them to engage in social, political and cultural activities, and also could interfere with other activities such as school work (Hamade, 2013), it promotes international partnership projects among learners; it provides a space where learners learn from each other, increases interaction, the exchange of ideas and learning experiences and discussion on different topics and from different points of view are all possible (Garrett & Cutting, 2012; Green, Wyllie & Jackson, 2014). So, graduates of nursing programmes must be able to provide accurate, culturally appropriate information to their clients and they must be competent in working as a collaborative team (AACN, 2008). Furthermore, social media provides new opportunities to support and enhance clinical experiences, improves communication, educational and organisational skills and raise issues of privacy and dissemination that are not present in more traditional forms of education (Grassley & Bartoletti, 2009).

Nurse educators in the 21st century have a set of technological and innovations tools to engage and stimulate student nurse learning such as virtual reality, patient simulation, blogs, wikis and computer-assisted learning (Baxter, Akhtar-Danesh, Valaitis, Stanyon & Sproul, 2009; Kelly, Lyng, McGrath & Cannon 2009; McConville & Lane, 2006; Gerdprasert, Pruksacheva, Panijpan & Ruenwongsa, 2010), which these emerging technologies will change the way nursing education is offered in the future. So, nurse educators have the challenge to create and use teaching methods that will engage and

stimulate learners to become competent nurses and support to achieve the learning goals and objectives (Skiba, 2007). Thus, the role of nurse educator includes facilitator of learning, promoter of critical thinking, evaluator, coach and clinical mentor (Siela, Twibell & Keller, 2008) to be educated regarding policies of the institution and socialised into the profession (Blauvelt & Spath, 2008). On the other hand, nurse educators need to be able to engage in technological strategies, adult learning principles and active learning environments based on futuristic technology (Dunbar, 2001) in order to guide learners in the safe, professional and responsible use of this technology (AACN, 2008). Also, nurse educators provide an educational context in which partnerships between learners improve (Schmitt et al., 2012) to facilitate the achievement and development of communication skills to ensure appropriate and effective professional communication. And however, they must be fully informed of their rights and students' rights in the process, and they must take efforts to protect themselves, their students and the public from privacy breaches (Sharoff, 2010). For curriculum**,** traditionally, maintaining patient confidentiality and ethical practice have been considered a foundational component of the nursing curricula. Social media is needed to merge with the curriculum to improve the performance of traditional teaching methods and awareness of e-professionalism among learners and educators in order to suitably utilise it to enhance instruction and the learning process. Thus, there is an urgent necessity to include the ethical use of social media in nursing practice (Bennett, Maton & Kervin, 2008; Kimmons, 2014).

5. Benefits of social media in nursing education

Social media is a platform that supports learning used as an innovative and engaging approach for educating nursing professionals by facilitating and extending the discussion away the traditional classroom, fostering critical thinking, providing collaboration among students and educators and assisting with patient education (Green & Hope, 2010; Green, Wyllie & Jackson, 2014; Peck, 2014). In addition, it assists nurse educators in encouraging learners to gain knowledge and skills in professional communication, patient privacy, health policy, ethics and writing competencies (ANA, 2011). In the nursing profession, social media is provided clinical education to healthcare professionals by helping patients easier to acquire healthcare information and other useful medical resources, patients can participate in virtual seminars, receive healthcare support and track their personal physical progress through the social media (Ventola, 2014).

6. Risks of social media in nursing education

The use of social media as an educational strategy raises privacy concerns regarding the interactions among students and between students and educators (Englund, Chappy, Jambunathan & Gohdes, 2012). One of the risks of using social media is posting unprofessional content that can reflect negatively on students, related institutions and the nursing profession in general, as a violation of patient privacy and confidentiality, use of discriminatory language, images of sexual suggestiveness, and communication about patients or the academic institution in a negative fashion (Chretien, Greysen, Chretien & Kind, 2009). In addition, it can be said that there is the negative effect of using social media on nurses is distractions and interruptions during the working time (Piscotty et al., 2015). So, the misuse of social media platforms by nursing students is of growing concern in nursing education; where more students, educators and programmes are faced with the consequences of misuse, as possible exposure to lawsuits by patients or others who are allowed to confidentiality, breached patient confidentiality and the limitation in professional relationships. Further, there are academic or disciplinary actions for students, failure of clinical course and stop the programme.

7. Recommendation

In most nursing programmes, educators should explore the value of social media and social media platforms to promote learning in scientific thinking and methodologies by establishing discussions

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between paired students from different countries and cultures (National League for Nursing, 2010). In addition, educators should include policies on the use of social media in their curricula and teach students to use them appropriately from the very start of their courses, promoting discussion and analysis on the subjects of privacy, confidentiality and professionalism. Also, nurses should have a professional, ethical and legal responsibility to protect against the risk of violating professional boundaries (Baker, 2013). Thus, curriculum developers need to consider learning environments and activities with the aim of internationalising learning and teaching in ways that recognise, respect and usefully engage the ethnic and cultural diversity of students (Chen, 2007; Gray, Chang & Kennedy, 2010; Rogers, Graham & Mayes, 2007).

8. Conclusion

Social media considered as interesting and valuable tool/way/strategy in nursing education, it creates opportunities to share information and to develop communication skills. In addition, it leads to innovative solutions to transform old methods and ways of thinking that requires educators to be innovative and to engage in new methods for their education. Through social media there exist inclusive, culturally diverse, informal learning communities that share students with online environments in which they may work comfortably and link with others around the world to discuss and synthesise the concepts and ideas to promote the understanding effective, ethical and culturally sensitive application in this age of the 'free-range learner'. With this approach, the high level of awareness and wide vision of nurse educators about global learning community and using technological methods/audiovisual tools/strategies in education/nursing education in the future has a vital role.

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