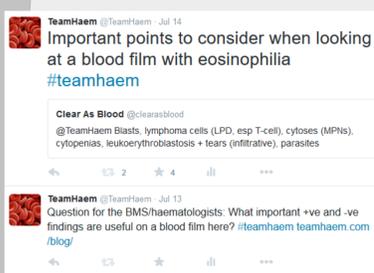
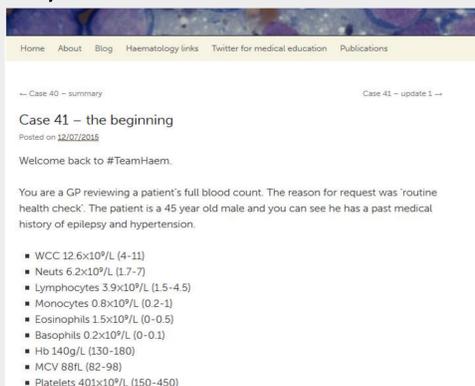


Introduction

The way healthcare professionals learn is changing. Social media (SoMe), has become an increasingly valuable way for people to disseminate information, learn and keep up-to-date. TeamHaem was established to provide a free haematology-based learning resource on SoMe, that enables people from various healthcare specialties to interact.

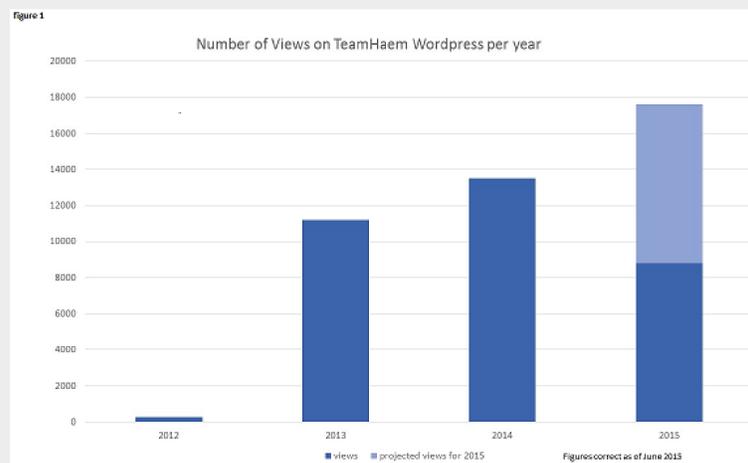
Methods

Our main learning method is to present fictional clinical cases using the website WordPress (www.teamhaem.com) to create the backbone of our case and Twitter (@TeamHaem), a widely used SoMe microblogging website, to lead the discussion. Both websites allow the use of images and can be accessed from computers and smartphones, allowing user-directed learning. We facilitate evidence-based discussion with followers and cases evolve over time. Using the hashtag #TeamHaem enables others to follow the case. Following each case we summarise the main learning points. Updates from conferences and journal articles are also tweeted. We have collaborated with other SoMe sites on joint haematology-based cases. The GMC have clear guidelines on the use of social media and professionalism. We ensure that patient confidentiality is maintained with fictional case scenarios and we are clear that we are facilitators to learning and are not an authoritative body.



Results

TeamHaem has been operational since 2012 and as of October 2015 has 1754 followers on Twitter, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists and biomedical scientists. We have published 45 cases. Our WordPress blog has been viewed by people from 92 countries this year. Views to the blog have increased year on year (figure 1).



Discussion

There are increasing numbers of medical based SoMe sites covering different specialties. TeamHaem continues to encourage learning and debate with regular haematology based scenarios and updates. There is enthusiasm for 'live' case scenarios, running over an hour or so, and this could be a collaboration with other groups to incorporate other specialty opinions and skill sets to facilitate learning.

The beauty of using social media as a tool to learning is its ease of access, and ability to enable interactive learning while 'on the go' by using smart phones, or anywhere which enables internet access.

We have previously collaborated with other medical SoMe sites (geekymedics and Association for elderly medicine education) on haematology based topics. This has enabled us to reach a wider interested audience.



The format of our Wordpress site has also been modified to enable each individual case to be archived to enable easier use of TeamHaem as a retrospective educational resource.

What are the potential pitfalls of using social media? Users of social media need to be aware of professionalism guidelines. The GMC have guidelines on the use of social media and professionalism, and people partaking in any SoMe medical education forum must be aware of these. The 140 character limit of tweets on Twitter does limit length of discussion and users must be aware of using abbreviations that may be misinterpreted. Fictional case scenarios are developed to illustrate haematological conditions which ensures that there is no breach of patient confidentiality.

We have also stated that we are not an authoritative body and that TeamHaem is a facilitator to learning and debate

Future Developments

Interaction is a vital key in social media's ability to enable learning. Live cases on Twitter and collaborations with other social media sites that are using live video based fictional scenarios will, we believe, encourage user interaction, and enable visual learning methods.

We would like to have more in depth audience participation on treatment options in our case scenarios, however due to our current demographics this is often not possible currently.

We are in discussions to start a social media medical education collaborative for the North East of England along with Medisense, Mediwikis and Geeky Medics to create a North East SoMe collaborative). Which will enable our users to access a wider variety of skill sets for learning and will enable us to reach a new audience.

There are also plans to work with the University of Newcastle medical students, and in October this year we ran our first case as a pilot project to encourage undergraduate use.

As our community grows and develops so will the strength of discussion and debate.

