Twitter for physicians and scientists

Benefits of Twitter and social media; Twitter allows you to:

- Keep track of developments in your field and keep in touch with distant colleagues (you can follow hashtags of items of interest to see what people are talking about)
- Present your scientific ideas and interests to a general audience and establish yourself as expert in your field
- Alert the media and distant colleagues when you’ve published a paper/made a development in your field
- Take control of your digital footprint
- Seek information and ask questions about tough clinical cases or research problems

Getting started:

- Review Stanford University guidelines: [http://stan.md/2iCeBnw](http://stan.md/2iCeBnw)
  - “Do not engage in activities on social networks that raise actual or perceived conflicts of interest between your university obligations and your outside financial, business, consulting or other interests”
  - “Do not use or disclose protected health information”
  - “Express political opinions and engage in political activities only in your individual capacity and avoid the appearance that you are speaking or acting for the university in political matters”
- Review AMA guidelines on the professionalism of social media use: [http://stan.md/2jLPhZI](http://stan.md/2jLPhZI)
  - “If [you] interact with patients on the Internet, [you] must maintain appropriate boundaries of the patient-physician”
  - “[You] should consider separating personal and professional content online”
- Refer to Twitter’s Help Center, which provides basic instructions: [http://stan.md/2jLJm6n](http://stan.md/2jLJm6n)
- Follow accounts of medical associations, health policy foundations, and leading medical journals (including JAMA, JAMA Surgery, NEJM, Annals of Surgery, etc.) and people who routinely talk about what interests you (identify them by searching for relevant hashtag)
- Be sure to tweet consistently – whether that’s once/day or once/week
- Always remember: think before you tweet (everything you say is public)
What to tweet:

- Articles from mainstream media or scholarly journals on developments in your field
- Commentary on news or developments in your field
- News, nuggets and personal thoughts (“Inspired by that talk”) from presentations at scientific meetings and conferences
- Articles or press releases on your work
- Notes of congratulations to colleagues or people in your field who have received awards or honors
- Always remember: Avoid jargon/insider terms if you want to build a broader, non-MD audience

How to build up followers:

- Follow accounts of institutions and people as outlined above
- “Like” tweets that you find compelling and retweet content that is relevant and of interest to you
- Tweet consistently – whether that’s once/day or once/week
- When attending scientific meetings and conferences use designated hashtag (e.g. #ASC2017 for upcoming Academic Surgery Congress) and consider following people currently using that hashtag
- Use hashtags (but judiciously so) to ensure people interested in that topic can find you; a primer is at http://stan.md/2jxW5MV

Examples of doctors doing it right:

- https://twitter.com/HeartBobH: nice mix of personal and professional; he engages with his audience often and shares a lot of Stanford content
- https://twitter.com/surgeon_general: short memorable tweets with fantastic use of multimedia; tweets consistently
- https://twitter.com/emmaseppala: has taken curation approach to feed; tweets consistently and frequently about topics in her field with right amount of hashtags and mentions
- https://twitter.com/larrychu: enthusiastic and upbeat tweets that invite you to read them
- https://twitter.com/cuttingforstone: clear, stand-alone sentences; he uses the right amount of hashtags and mentions

OCPA social media resources; we can:

- Provide general guidance on social media posting
- Retweet some of your posts to our 170K followers
- Tweet links to articles/stories you think are important to highlight
- Offer a platform for longer-form writing, via our Scope blog