

Current medical education: medical content on Instagram® in COVID-19's time in Peru

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To the editor:

The interruption of face-to-face medical education due to COVID-19 is an unprecedented scenario that has accelerated the use of technological resources in learning.¹ Students of healthcare professions are seeking to continue their academic training using the Internet. However, the information that they find is not restricted to literature databases—it is also present in social networks, such as Instagram.²

The use of Instagram® for communication and entertainment purposes is well known. However, studies in different countries have shown that it is also useful in medical education.^{3,4} Thus, Peruvian users have increased the production of medical content during the pandemic, being available from any device connected to the Internet. These innovative audiovisual materials (flashcards, videos, etc.) have sparked the interest of many online followers due to quick access, low cost, and practicality of use (Table 1). Likewise, the content allows the interaction and exchange of knowledge, benefiting the collaborative learning of many students.⁴

Table 1. Medical content accounts on Instagram® in Peru during the health emergency.

Instagram® account name (with URL)	Number of followers as of 10-30-2020	The first date of publication of medical content
neurocparatodos https://www.instagram.com/neurocparatodos/?hl=es-la	35058	27 may-2020
drjuanca_11 https://www.instagram.com/drjuanca_11/	18913	02 abr-2020
doctora_fio https://www.instagram.com/doctora_fio/	17770	2 abr-2020
soyvicme https://www.instagram.com/soyvicmed/?hl=es-la	17475	23 abr-2020
med.puntes https://www.instagram.com/med.puntes/	10153	04 abr-2020
dr.rickys https://www.instagram.com/dr.rickys/	7926	13 jul-2020
dra.dendrita https://www.instagram.com/dra.dendrita/	4479	23 jun-2020
apasionados.med https://www.instagram.com/apasionados.med/	3829	25 abr-2020
princesalud https://www.instagram.com/princesalud/	3206	26 abr-2020
proyecto_comparte https://www.instagram.com/proyecto_comparte/?hl=es-la	2541	10 abr-2020

Source: prepared by the authors from data obtained from the social network Instagram®

It should be considered that the information presented on social networks is not subject to strict reviews when shared and may affect the veracity of the academic material offered.⁵ For this reason, we recommend that the medical content on Instagram[®] be accompanied by the bibliographic sources used in its preparation. Thus, the use of Instagram[®] does not replace the information on higher quality websites, but given its advantages, it constitutes an alternative tool that is increasingly used by students.⁵

We conclude that medical education on Instagram[®] has been widely accepted by its users and has been used long before the appearance of SARS-CoV-2 with good results. It is a useful online tool that must continue looking for standards that ensure the quality of its content, this being its main limitation. Despite this, we consider that it is an alternative with great potential for use in current medical training in times of pandemic.

Notes

Contribution roles

RRCR, DOG participated in the entire process of writing the article, from the conception of the idea to its submission to the journal.

Conflicts of interests

The authors completed the ICMJE conflict of interest declaration and declare that they did not receive funds for the preparation of this letter; They do not have financial relationships with organizations that may have an interest in the article published in the last three years and they do not have other relationships or activities that may influence the publication of the article. The forms can be requested by contacting the responsible author or the Editorial Committee of the Journal.

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