

A Study of Social Media Dive of Delhi/NCR Hospitals

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Abstract—Social media is transforming everyday life and expectations of people. Given the speed with which the volume of activity on social media has grown, the need and demand of patients for information gathering has also grown drastically. Patients today look for reliable, up to date and understandable information, want more instant answers to their queries, like to seek second opinions, wish to provide feedback, look for emotional support and also seek expert advice on social media forums. The available social media information is impacting patients decisions regarding how, when and which treatment and hospital to select. This has brought amazing possibilities for hospitals and other health care service providers. However, to encash the opportunities, the hospitals are required to connect, collaborate and communicate with patients to engage them and allow them participation. To know how much hospitals are coping up with the challenge, the present paper has made an attempt to study the presence of Delhi/NCR hospitals in the social media domain. Only 70% of the hospitals under study are found to be using social media platforms. Face book, twitter and you tube are found to be the most popular mediums of social connect by the hospitals. More than 50% of the hospitals are present on at least three social media platforms. However, hospitals are found to be using social media for education, awareness, marketing, advertising and brand management. More sincere efforts are required to engage individual patients. This can be achieved by adopting a social media policy with the objective of enhancing patient service and support to build a long run online community.

Keywords: Social media, hospitals, patients, face book, you tube, twitter.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well established fact that social media, in the personal as well as the professional realm, is here to stay. Social Media has unique capabilities as a medium of communication due to anytime, anywhere access to relevant information. Social media has made interactions between end users and service providers possible by providing simple, easy to access mode of sharing information. With the increasing use of smart phones, I Pads, tablets, the activity on social media is on the path of exponential growth.

The term social media encompasses all online communication tools and networks which provide means of interactions among people and organizations wherein they create, share and update information and ideas. Social media includes social

networks, videos and photo sharing sites, blogs such as face book, you tube, twitter, LinkedIn, Google plus and so on. Growing usage of social media is creating unprecedented influences, impacts, benefits and opportunities in the health care sector both on supply and demand side.

Studies have shown that Social Media has become the voice of patients. Patients are increasing using social media to:-

- i. Get instant information, answers and solutions to their health related problems and questions
- ii. Obtain information on health, diet and diseases.
- iii. Interact with experts
- iv. Seek second opinions
- v. Interact with other patients and get emotional support.

As a result the perception and view of the patients regarding health care services are changing very fast with digitally available information. Further, patients today are willing to share information and have the ability to influence peer groups. It is creating new expectations for accuracy, transparency, reliability, trust, response time and so on. In other words, social media information is influencing decisions to seek care. Social media is directing the decision of the patients regarding how, when and from where to seek health care services. In a nutshell, the lesson for the hospitals and other health care service providers is that patients are empowered today and they want to be involved and participate in their health related decisions. This has brought both opportunities and challenges for the hospitals providing health care service. They are needed to guide their patients, satisfy them about quality content and become accurate and trusted source of information. Using social media, they can enhance their organizational visibility, market products and service, build brand image, search talents and scale new heights.

Today, the ability to sustain and ensure scalability depends upon how fast and effectively hospitals are ready to listen, connect, collaborate, engage and participate with patients. The present paper is an attempt to study how the Delhi/NCR hospitals are meeting the challenge. The main **objectives** of the study are:

- i) To study the presence of Delhi/NCR hospitals on different social media platforms.
- ii) To study and list the activities for which social media platforms are used currently.
- iii) To identify the way forward.

2. DATE & METHODOLOGY

The data for 80 private sector hospitals have been collected by visiting their websites. The obtained data is used to derive information about:-

- i) Existence of hospitals on social media.
- ii) Popular channels of social media used by them.
- iii) Purposes for which social media forums have been used by hospitals

Data is collected for knowing their existence on face book, twitter, you tube, Linked in and Google plus. Hospitals' face book, websites, twitter accounts, you tube accounts are also visited to enlist the main activities undergoing on these portals.

3. EXISTENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 1 document the existence of Delhi/NCR hospitals as per number of social media platforms used by them.

Table 1: Existence of Hospitals on Social Media Platforms

Sr. No	No. of social media platforms used	No. of hospitals	% of total
1	All five	1	1.25 %
2	Four	18	22.5 %
3	Three	23	28.75 %
4	Two	10	12.5 %
5	One	3	3.75 %
6	None	25	31.25 %

The table reveals that out of 80 hospitals which have internet presence in the form of their websites, 25 hospitals are not present or active on any social media forum. This implies 31.25% of the hospitals under study have no social media existence.

Only, Batra Hospital is active on all five forums of social media. 41 hospitals are using either 3 or 4 social media platforms for interacting and informing patients. All the popular hospital names i.e. Fortis, Max, Apollo, Delhi Heart & Lung Institute, Medanta belong to this category. So only around 50% of the Delhi/NCR hospitals have shown good social media presence.

4. PRESENCE AS PER CHANNELS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 2 summarizes the number of hospitals who are present on each social media platform under study.

Table 2: Popularity of Social Media Platforms

Social Media Platform	No. of Hospitals	% of Total (80) Hospitals	% of Hospitals which are on Social Media (55)
Facebook	55	68.75%	100%
Twitter	47	58.75%	85%
You Tube	30	37.5%	55%
LinkedIn	23	28.75%	42%
Google +	14	17.5%	25%

The table reveals that face book and twitter are two most popular social media platforms used by Delhi/NCR hospitals. All the 55 hospitals who are using social media have face book accounts. 85% of them have twitter accounts too. 55% also use you tube for providing useful information to the audience. Google + is not yet popular. Only 14 hospitals are using it too.

5. ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA ARE USED

Among the five social media platform under study, face book is the most widely used for various activities. Twitter is popular for hash tag contests and campaigns. You tube has been used for spreading awareness and patient testimonials. Linked in is found to be more useful for corporate communications and networking, It is to be noted that Google + has shown inactive presence among hospitals. Most of the time, the contents posted on Google + are same as on face book. The overlapping of contents also exists for other platforms of social media too. Mainly hospitals are found to be actively using various social media platforms for the following purposes.-

- a) Face book
 - Face book has been extensively used to:
 - i) Educate patients.
 - ii) Share medical facts
 - iii) Create awareness about health
 - iv) Provide health tips
 - v) Spread awareness about best food habits
 - vi) Give tips on life style diseases
 - vii) Provide relevant information on prevention and cure for currently prevailing diseases such as dengue, swine flu etc.
 - viii) Obtain feedback
 - ix) Provide response to medical queries.
 - x) Help patients seek appointments
 - xi) Share success stories.
 - xii) Advertise about new medical services and latest treatments.
 - xiii) Celebrate important dates.
 - xiv) Share achievements and awards.
 - xv) Share media coverage
 - xvi) Promote their brand and so on.

b) Twitter

Twitter is fast and has been used by hospitals to share quick facts, updates and to provide quick responses to the queries. The hospitals are found to have posted same information on face book and twitter. Some of the popular activities for which twitter is found to be used are:

- i) To give quick tips and advice.
- ii) To provide quick solutions to patients problems.
- iii) To conduct # hash tag contests and campaigns like eat smart campaign, health quizzes of Apollo, Green corridor campaign of Fortis hospital and so on.
- iv) To celebrate important days and events.
- v) To create awareness about current prevailing diseases.
- vi) To share recognitions and awards
- vii) To get feedback
- viii) To propagate health care diet.
- ix) To share success stories
- x) To share hospital's philanthropic activities.

c) You tube

Today, everything can be learned through you tube videos. Hospitals are posting new, informative, educative videos to spread awareness. Success stories and patients testimonials have also been shared for brand promotion and managements. The main types of videos posted on you tube by hospitals are:

- i) Medical procedure videos.
- ii) First aid views
- iii) Chairman speech
- iv) Patient testimonials
- v) Disease educational videos
- vi) Awareness on health, food habits, diet etc.
- vii) Success stories
- viii) New launches

d) Linked in

The hospitals are mostly found to be using Linked in accounts for

- i) Corporate communications like growth, finances, recruitment etc.
- ii) Showcasing employees
- iii) Marketing and advertising
- iv) Corporate networking
- v) Spreading knowledge about the hospital

e) Google +

Google + has received tough competition from face book and the hospitals are mostly found to have mere presence on it as contents on face book are mostly posted again on

it. However, attempt has been made to engage the audience by posting facts, tips and solutions to health related problems

6. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

No doubt, Delhi /NCR hospitals are using social media platforms for promoting healthcare at patients' home. However, they are not very interactive with patients. These platforms have allowed hospitals to build relationships and trust through promotion of wellness and healthy behaviours. But direct engagement with individual patients is uncommon. The use of social media has been done more for advertising, marketing and brand management.

So, the required next step is to use social media more strategically instead of using it in unidirectional way. A patient oriented social media policy is required to be devised with the objective of enhancing patient service and support. Patients should be allowed to reach doctors, ask questions and request prescriptions of at least common ailments.

The social media strategy should also allow all social media outlets to work together to create a cohesive online presence and build a long run online community. Social media changes online dialogue from one to many to many to many at a rapid speed. A well devised social media policy will also help them to avoid dangers of social media such as risks of privacy violation, information overloads, professional frauds and threat to reputation, and so on. Now it is time to move forward and create a social media channel which listens, engages and allows more and more participation of patients

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