

# Social Networks and Medical Doctors and Students: a Review of the Main Recommendations on Using them

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## ABSTRACT

### Objective

There is widespread use of platforms such as Twitter and Facebook amongst medical doctors and students. Objective: to review the main recommendations for using social networks by medical doctors and students, and to propose useful guidelines and professional behaviour.

### Methods

Search strategy: diverse queries and their combination were used in Google and Scholar Google: “guidelines OR recommendations”, “social media”, “social networks OR networking”, “medical profession OR practice”, “ethical guidelines”. First 30 results were analysed for each query. Sixteen guidelines were selected based on their relevance. Content analysis, comparing statements to find agreements and differences, was made. Finally, a new set of recommendations was written.

### Results

Several institutions such as the American Medical Association, the British Medical Association, etc. laid down guidelines. 30% were addressed to both medical doctors and students but 75% to employees of a specific company. Different levels of participation restrictions in social networks are expressed.

### Conclusions

1. There is a general consensus about the key role that medical doctors have in social networks, 2. Potential negative and positive consequences (professional, personal and in medical profession) are considered depending on their behaviour in these environments. 3. A Decalogue of recommendations was proposed (see: <http://www.slideshare.net/WebMedicaAcreditada/health-social-networks>).