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The interactive ePDF to social media in family medicine

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Background: While many of us may find it difficult to remember a time before Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or WhatsApp, not all family doctors are engaged in social media. Despite widespread use of this new paradigm of interpersonal communication, “social media” remains in its infancy and many of us have a lot to learn. Whilst various national associations including a number of European medical organisations have published social media guidelines for healthcare professionals, we are aware of few comprehensive family medicine resources that empower users with the necessary tools and understanding to become proficient and effective professional users of social media.

Aim: Our aims in creating this ePDF, through using actual case studies in peer-to-peer social media usage, is to empower family doctors, GP trainees and medical students, enabling them to make good use of social media, and to develop professional social media strategies that support the maintenance of a healthy work/life balance.

Method: We had wonderful contributions from many individuals from inside and outside of EQuIP and VdGM. These strategic and experienced users of social media told us their stories; stories, which we hope will inspire and motivate readers to experience social media for themselves, whilst in a very practical and tangible sense, highlight the nature and functionality of social media.

Results: Areas, which are covered in the interactive ePDF, include social media myths, professional use of social media, social media trends and codes of conduct that will empower the reader with the necessary tools to enable skilful, proficient and effective usage of social media.

Conclusions: EQuIP and VdGM have gained immeasurably during the process of putting it together. Our knowledge and understanding of social media has grown during a process, which for those involved was a labour of love.