

Evaluation of LinkedIn Across Clinical and Translational Science Award Hubs

Rebecca Olatunde; Barbara Tafuto MLS PhD, Pamela Dahlen MLIS

There has been an increase in the use of social media worldwide in the past year due to the pandemic. Research suggests a positive correlation between social media usage and learning institutions for the enhancement of learning, information sharing, and tools for recruiting students. In this vein, social media poses the opportunity support clinical and translational services, create instant interactions, promote events, and supplement institutional websites. LinkedIn is a social media network used by many professionals to showcase their unique personalities through experience, skills, and education. CTSA Hubs can use LinkedIn to connect with clinical and translational research (CTR) professionals to increase their awareness of CTR services, along with awareness of fellowships and grants for graduate students and researchers. The objective of this research was to understand the actual use of LinkedIn among the CTSA consortium. A secondary objective of this research was to understand the process and timeframe it takes to build LinkedIn connections. CTSA Search solutions was used to identify CTSA institutions across the United States. All CTSA websites were evaluated for LinkedIn accounts connected to the hub website, 26 CTSA hubs had a LinkedIn account. LinkedIn was then searched for CTSA accounts not connected to their website, one CTSA hub had a LinkedIn account that was connected to its CTSA hub website. Among the 26 accounts, 20 made bi-weekly posts on upcoming seminars, research & grant opportunities, and funding available for graduate students. 94% of the CTSA website connected LinkedIn Accounts had more than 100 connections, 41.2% had more than 500 connections, and about 17.6% had more than 1000 connections. The LinkedIn accounts connected to the CTSA website were either specific to a CTSA Hub or the Hubs corresponding to a hospital or medical school. This project implemented the review of NJ ACTS Members' list and leveraged LinkedIn recommendations to generate connections. While trying to build such connections, it was found that LinkedIn limited the number of weekly connections to 100 and making further connections was restricted once that limit was reached. During an 8-week period, this project expanded the NJ ACTS LinkedIn account from 4 to 261 connections. Overall, this research supports the continued use of LinkedIn by CTSA Hubs to proliferate its message to the community.

