BAD NEWS TRAVELS FURTHEST: THE SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT OF PUBLICATIONS AROUND TRIAL DISCLOSURE AND MEDICAL WRITING

INTRODUCTION

• Issues around disclosure of clinical trial results and provision of medical writing support have gained significant traction in the social and conventional media, as well as among industry professionals and academics. We sought to understand the social media response to articles concerning these topics.

• Research Design and Methods: We assessed the social media reach of 7 recent publications, representing 3 categories of media: 2012-2013 with positive and negative perspectives. We also undertook a temporal and sentiment analysis of tweets containing the #AllTrials hastag.

• Review of 7 publications that discussed transparency in clinical trials and/or the role of medical writers. Three of these were generally critical or gave a negative opinion of transparency efforts, while 4 took a more positive line.

METHODS

• We chose 7 recent publications that discussed transparency in clinical trials and/or the role of medical writers. Three of these were generally critical or gave a negative opinion of transparency efforts, while 4 took a more positive line.

• Articles were included in the analysis if they met the following criteria: published in 2012-2013; peer-reviewed; considered to be related to transparency in clinical trials or provision of medical writing support; and had a written or visual component.

• Objective: To assess the social media reach of these publications and to identify any differences in the social media response to articles with positive and negative perspectives.

• We assessed the social media reach of 7 articles that were published in 2012-2013, representing 3 categories of media: 2012-2013 with positive and negative perspectives. We also undertook a temporal and sentiment analysis of tweets containing the #AllTrials hashtag.

• Papers critical of the industry attract the most attention on social media

• Why was this research needed?

• Publications with a negative perspective, highlighting under-reporting of trials or criticizing medical writing support, had greater social media impact than publications with positive perspectives.

• What are the implications for the future?

• The medical publications community should engage in active communication of different perspectives on trial disclosure, to ensure that alternative viewpoints are heard.

• What should we do now?

• We recommend that medical publications community should engage in active communication of different perspectives on trial disclosure, to ensure that alternative viewpoints are heard.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

• This small sample shows greater online reach of publications with a negative perspective to trial disclosure and medical writing support.

• We assessed the social media reach of 7 recent publications that discussed transparency in clinical trials and/or the role of medical writers. Three of these were generally critical or gave a negative opinion of transparency efforts, while 4 took a more positive line.

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