Objective
We analyzed these data to investigate the prevalence and nature of the use of social media by healthcare professionals to find and access scientific literature.

Research design
- Analysis of the 459 survey respondents who listed ‘medicine’ as the primary area of interest in the NPG dataset.

Results
- Most respondents were aged 35-54 years (46%), residing in North America or Europe (48%), and based at a hospital (44%), university/college (27%) or medical school (14%)(Figure 1).
- Most respondents (68%; 60%) used social networks regularly. The breakdown of individual social networks is shown in Figure 2.
- Only 56 (12%) reported using any social networks to comment on new research and 89 (19%) to discover new scientific publications. Use of individual networks is shown in Figure 3.
- ResearchGate was the most popular network for discovering recommended literature (Figure 4). However, 276 (60%) thought that online networks were useful for sharing authored content.

Conclusions
- Compared with the full survey population, researchers with an interest in medicine were as likely to use social networks, although a little less likely to use them to discover and comment on literature.
- Use of social media for literature discovery by medical researchers remains low.

Abstract
Objective: A recent Nature survey of 3,490 researchers revealed widespread use of social media across all disciplines. We analyzed these data to investigate the prevalence and nature of the use of social media by healthcare professionals to find and access scientific literature.

Research design and methods: We conducted an analysis of the 459 survey respondents who listed ‘medicine’ as their primary area of interest.

Results: Most were aged 35-54 (60%), residing in North America or Europe (60%) and based at a hospital (44%), university/college (27%) or medical school (14%). Most (68%; 60%) used social networks regularly. The breakdown of individual social networks is shown in Figure 2. Only 56 (12%) reported using any social networks to comment on new research and 89 (19%) to discover new scientific publications. Use of individual networks is shown in Figure 3. ResearchGate was the most popular network for discovering recommended literature (Figure 4). However, 276 (60%) thought that online networks were useful for sharing authored content.

Conclusions: Compared with the full survey population, researchers with an interest in medicine were as likely to use social networks, although somewhat less likely to use them to discover and comment on literature. Use of social media for literature discovery by medical researchers remains low.

Reference

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Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

A recent Nature survey of 3,490 researchers revealed widespread use of social media across all disciplines. Most respondents were aged 35-54 years (46%), residing in North America or Europe (48%), and based at a hospital (44%), university/college (27%) or medical school (14%). Most respondents (68%; 60%) used social networks regularly. The breakdown of individual social networks is shown in Figure 2. Only 56 (12%) reported using any social networks to comment on new research and 89 (19%) to discover new scientific publications. Use of individual networks is shown in Figure 3. ResearchGate was the most popular network for discovering recommended literature (Figure 4). However, 276 (60%) thought that online networks were useful for sharing authored content.