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LETTER TO THE EDITORS

In Response: Understanding the Reach and Recruitment Power of Social Media in Anesthesiology Residencies

MAX FEINSTEIN, MD, MA

MARC SHERWIN, MD

TO THE EDITORS:

We read with interest the recent article by Lepore and Duffy¹ characterizing social media use by anesthesiology residency programs in the United States. Their findings on the growing role of platforms such as Instagram align with the broader trends seen in research on this topic in the last 5 years.

In a 2021 study, we assessed social media presence of anesthesiology residency programs in the United States.² In this cross-sectional study spanning 2009–2021 (inclusive), it was noted that the number of residency programs with accounts on Instagram, Twitter (now X), and Facebook were steadily increasing. At the time of that study, Instagram was the most popular social media platform for anesthesiology residency programs, with 110 of 157 programs (70.0%) maintaining accounts on Instagram. This closely parallels with Lepore and Duffy who determined that

124 of 166 program (74.7%) maintained Instagram accounts.

In a subsequent study in 2022, we explored the relationship between program social media activity and prospective applicant interest, measured by unique pageviews on FREIDA, the American Medical Association's residency program database.³ Using a logistic regression model to assess the relationship between social media activity and unique FREIDA pageviews while controlling for the number of residency positions, Doximity rank, and program age, a dose-dependent relationship for Instagram activity in 2021 was identified, in which 1 additional Instagram post was associated with 2.40 increased odds of 1 additional unique FREIDA pageview. This supports the idea that social media engagement may play a meaningful role in shaping applicant behavior, and there is value in the effort required to maintain a social media page.

We appreciate Lepore and Duffy's contributions to this evolving area of academic inquiry to characterize the social media presence and activity of anesthesiology residency programs in the United States. With the ever-expanding social media platforms available to applicants and residencies alike, such as TikTok, we are eager to see what future research into this topic will reveal.

References

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The authors are in the Department of Anesthesiology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, NY. Max Feinstein is an Assistant Professor; Marc Sherwin is an Associate Professor.

Corresponding author: Max Feinstein, Mount Sinai Hospital, 1 Gustave L. Levy Place, New York, NY 10029.

Email address: Max Feinstein, MaxFeinstein@gmail.com