

Social Media Impact: Analyzing Public Perception Shifts of NICU Nurse in News Coverage

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Introduction

This study examines the media's unique role in shaping the public view of professional purity and how such attitudes impact the institutional and public responses of Neonatal Intensive Care (NICU) nurses.

Through a qualitative thematic analysis of news coverage, we will analyze the coverage of Sierra Samuels, a NICU nurse, who was fired after sparking controversy after being accused of mocking a newborn with gastroschisis on Instagram. This posting provoked a debate on the potential impacts of the use and misuse of social media in the healthcare industry.

Overall, this study discusses the role of social media in NICU nurse communication, which further questions the presence or lack thereof of media policies currently in place by the healthcare community.

Literature Review

Worldwide Impact

Social media has become an omnipresent aspect of modern day living. Approximately about 5.04 billion people, just over half of the world's population, utilizes social media which can affect both medical professionals' personal and professional lives.

The Problem

While shifting the traditional nature of the doctor-patient relationships, one of the main concerns regarding health care providers online presence is the lack of clear guidelines and the failure to self-monitor the implications of information being spread online by the medical professional (Al-Balushi et al., 2020). The main issue is that current present guidelines do not cover every possible interaction, rather were created with the intention to help guide individuals on how to have an online presence while adhering to rules of professional conduct within the workplace.

Methods

Data for this study was collected through a qualitative thematic analysis. Data was then interpreted through a systematic process from generating codes, or "open coding", produced through the inductive study and examination of 25 news coverage articles. Such information was then analyzed for common patterns and then incorporated into groups that would be then identified into generated shared themes.

Findings

1. Vitality of proper training and education of NICU nurses and healthcare professionals:

"In addition to the general HIPAA violation that we'd be looking at here, there's a sense of decency about the rights and expectations we all have in our likenesses and our images" (Weinstein, 2021).

"I think it's going to get worse. These young people can't seem to breathe without posting on social media. It's insane" (Susan, 2021).

"All the more reason people should put as much pressure as is needed on the healthcare industry to take the camera phones OUT OF THE HANDS OF ALL healthcare workers during their shift" (International Business Times, 2021).

2. The clear necessity to implement distinct of guidelines and rules for medical media use:

"We all certainly need to be careful with what we put on SM. The privileged position of a health worker should not be abused" (Igboke, 2021).

"With images, you have a certain expectation of privacy that if you're in an area that you're in an area that you believe to be private and in this case a hospital, even more so" (Weinstein, 2021).

"Employees who violate these privacy rules, despite being educated, are subject to disciplinary action including suspension or termination" (Jackson Memorial Hospital, 2021).

3. Essentialness of building a collective culture of awareness and organizational support within the medical profession:

"Protecting the privacy of our patients is always a top priority at Jackson Health System" (Holly, 2021).

"When you're at the hospital it would only seem to make sense that you have some privacy while you receive care. It's extremely upsetting to think that the people who are supposed to take care of you may actually be talking about you behind your back" (Krawczyk, 2021).

"As soon as we learned of this potential breach, we immediately placed this employee under administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation" (Holly, 2021).

Discussion

- Commanding combination of technology and social media is reshaping the global healthcare industry which raises the urgency of shifting generational preferences while illuminating the lack of clarity for organizational policies
- Serves as a wakeup call for re-updating current protocols and codes of conduct
- Privacy and separation of the boundaries between both personal and professional conduct remains an enduring problem
- Challenge of finding a balance between personal and professional use of social media may result from healthcare professionals' lack of privacy knowledge
- Inability of medical professionals to make informed decisions about posting content contributes to the number of "bad calls"
- Proper code of conduct in place allows employees to gain self-awareness and become more informed medical media decision makers
- Health care providers can become more cautious on what they portray online, which will result in fewer media violations
- Best course of action may be to clarify the distinct separation of personal and professional social media profiles for healthcare professionals and provide continuous training and education to help enable good social media conduct
- Findings emphasize the barrier that the lack of organizational support poses on promoting proper social media use within healthcare
- Promoting a positive outlook towards medical media codes of conduct helps to effectively enforce such regulations helping to decrease the potential risk of harm to patients, employees, and healthcare organizations everywhere



Figure 1: Nurse using iPhone by RealPeopleGroup from iStockphoto.



Figure 2: NICU nurse at work in a hospital by Andresr from iStockphoto.

Conclusions

Implications

Overall, this investigation helps showcase the challenges that NICU nurses and other health care professionals collectively face when trying to balance professional and personal social media use. Through this review, the issue of the lack of clarity regarding the distinction of professional conduct and personal boundaries in healthcare is highlighted, helping to emphasize further the urgency for a more progressive approach within healthcare organizations to create clear-cut social media guidelines and re-updated code of conduct.

Future Research

When medical professions successfully implement these approaches, the healthcare community can gain more self-awareness and knowledge regarding how we choose to depict ourselves online, and thus grasp the implications of such portrayals. By working to build an understanding of medical workers' character, positive behaviors can be enforced, helping reduce potential work risks like losing public trust, damaging one's reputation, bad reflections on the institution, and even the entire profession.

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