

NephMadness: Nephrology, Social Media, and Basketball

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Background

NephMadness is an educational project that leverages social media and Free Open Access Medical Education (FOAMed) to highlight advances and important issues in nephrology. NephMadness 2015 was the third year of this project.

Methods

The curriculum takes the form of an online game that mimics the NCAA basketball tournament, March Madness. Participants attempt to predict the winners of hypothetical contests between nephrology concepts. The NephMadness field consists of 64 concepts from 8 different domains of nephrology: cardiorenal, onconephrology, nutrition, obstetrics, infectious disease, vascular surgery, genetics, and critical care. The theme for 2015 was nephrology's interaction with other specialties of medicine. The editorial content was created by a team of nephrologists with experience in social media. Additionally, content experts assisted in building the field (selection committee) and fact-checked the editorial content. A blue ribbon panel of nephrologists determined the winners of each match-up. Engagement in the contest was assessed by participation, website traffic and use of the hashtag #NephMadness on Twitter.

Results

There were 342 entries in NephMadness (25% increase over 2014) representing 26 countries with three quarters from the US. Gender breakdown was 31% female, 69% male. 46% of the contestants were attendings, 24% fellows, 10% residents and 9% medical students. The hashtag #NephMadness was tweeted 4,297 times (190% increase) by 401 people (144% increase) between Jan 16 and June 16. Web traffic to the hosting site was triple its monthly average and included the single highest traffic day ever.

Conclusions

NephMadness is increasing engagement on three unique metrics. We believe this indicates that pairing social media with freely available, expert-generated content can stimulate interest in nephrology.



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