

EFFECTIVENESS OF A DIGITAL TEXTING PLATFORM TO FOSTER ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING IN TRAINEES AND EARLY CAREER NEONATOLOGISTS (TECAN)

AnnaMarie Arias-Shah¹, Sharla Rent², Anisha Bhatia³, Jenny Koo⁴, Sarah Bernstein², Sai Mukthapuram⁵

¹ Baylor College of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, Neonatology

² Duke University, Pediatrics, Neonatology

³ University of Alabama, Pediatrics, Neonatology

⁴ University of California San Diego, Pediatrics, Neonatology

⁵ Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Pediatrics, Neonatology

Background: Digital texting platforms, an important facet of electronic learning, foster engagement and collaboration between learners separated geographically, reaching a broad audience at low cost. Single-center studies demonstrate the success of texting platforms for medical education, but data supporting the use of this interface on a national scale are scarce.

Materials/Methods: (1) Explore the use of a digital texting platform to build topic-based interest groups within the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) TECaN. (2) Create a collaborative learning environment for TECaN members nationally, with a focus on preparation for the Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine subspecialty board exam.

Results: WhatsApp, inc. is a free texting platform chosen to allow for interactive communication between members with easy, voluntary addition of new members via a shared link. Initial interest groups formed in July 2019 included Neonatology Board Review, Quality Improvement and Research, Global Health, and Career Development. Within all groups, the number of members and unique commenters were tracked weekly. The Board Review group incorporated a structured topic-based review involving member-generated daily quizzes. The number of questions per week and the associated responses were tracked. For all groups, chat history was exported and descriptive variables were delimited using Microsoft Excel and analyzed using a Pivot Table.

Conclusions: Using an interactive texting interface led to progressively increased engagement from AAP TECaN members and served to link fellows and early career neonatologists across the US in a virtual peer learning community. Future directions include assessment of participant satisfaction/engagement, evaluation of the impact of virtual learning communities on overall engagement in other TECaN or AAP initiatives, as well as opportunities for expansion of this platform as a clinical collaboration tool.