Review of: "Can Twitter be used to improve learning outcomes in undergraduate medical education? A pilot study"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The report gives a good description of the use of Twitter as social media messaging as a tool for layering didactic and dialogical learning activities for a set of 32 undergraduate medical students. The report is clearly outlined and the theoretical framework supports the methods and analysis.

The purpose of the study is clearly stated as an evaluation of Twitter as a tool to enhance learning outcomes defined as scores and passage on NBME Shelf examinations taken directly after the intervention period. The literature review would be enhanced by a discussion connecting the four cited works to the purpose and design of the study. In addition, it would be helpful to have description of the multiple-choice questions which were developed for the intervention because of the potential effects on data analysis, data interpretation, and reported outcome measures.

In the introduction, Twitter, Facebook and Slack are highlighted as social media messaging platforms and as innovative learning tools to leverage learning outcomes in undergraduate medical education, and in the discussion, the authors note that most study participants did not have a Twitter account prior to this study and there may be alternative social media platforms which would be familiar and motivating to participants to increase enrollment in the study. An expanded explanation of this issue would be helpful in a discussion of further research. In addition to increased enrollment, do the authors see opportunities for increased engagement with a multiple-choice learning intervention and bidirectional communication? For example, utilizing alternative tools for the same BLLM-framed intervention and with similar participants might support an exploration of the correlations between bidirectional communication and Shelf exam scores.