A Healthy #Chat:
Twitter Chat Participation to Engage Audiences, Share Health Resources, and Track Impact

Objectives:
Twitter chats are a popular social media method for promoting awareness and sharing resources on consumer health topics.

This project provides best practices on how to:
• Locate relevant Twitter chats to attend.
• Actively participate by sharing quality health resources.
• Engage participants to discuss and explore your resources.
• Measure the efficacy of the Twitter chats.

Methods:
Twitter chats were attended three or more times per month to share quality consumer health resources with family caregivers.

• How to Locate Twitter Chats: Tweet Chats schedule on the website Symplur and through Twitter feeds of government and non-profit organizations.
• Management Dashboard for Twitter Chat Participation: HootSuite, which allows the user to view multiple Twitter streams on one screen.
• Measuring Impact of Twitter Chats: Twitonomy used to track % of tweets retweeted (shared by other users) and % of tweets favorited (liked by other users).

Results:
No positive correlation was found between number of Twitter chats attended and percentage of tweets retweeted or favorited.

• 34 Twitter chats were attended between May 1 and December 31, 2016 (3-5 chats per month).
• Frequently attended chats focused on dementia caregiving and provided the opportunity to interact with family caregivers and organizations that work with caregivers.
• % of tweets retweeted ranged from 29% to 49% over the eight month period, and % of tweets favorited ranged from 28% to 37%.

Conclusion:
• Twitter chats provide a unique opportunity to engage with both healthcare professionals and the general public.
• Tools like Symplur, HootSuite, and Twitonomy can be used to more effectively identify, participate in, and measure impact of chats.
• Although no positive correlation was found between number of chats attended and overall engagement, there was still a reasonably high level of Twitter engagement throughout the eight month period.
• Further research with a larger sample of Twitter accounts is needed to identify if chat attendance consistently leads to higher levels of engagement.