#FOAMems – The Impact to Date

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Social media use amongst healthcare professionals is on the rise and it is increasingly being used by paramedics as a platform for continuing education and international collaboration.

In February 2014 the hashtag ‘#FOAMems’ was registered – it is used by paramedics and other clinicians who are involved in sharing knowledge related to emergency medical services, Paramedicine, and prehospital care.

#FOAMems is an extension of the FOAM (free open access medical education) movement.

The purpose of this study was to characterize and evaluate the content of #FOAMems tweets in the first two years of operation.
Methods

- An analytical report and transcript for #FOAMems was generated on symplur.com, with a search date from 4th February 2014 to 4th February 2016, a total period of 24 months.

- Analysis of all tweets for a random one month period (1st-31st October 2015) containing the hashtag was also generated on both symplur.com and Followthehashtag.

- All tweets were reviewed and categorized by two reviewers. Data from all methods was combined to obtain the results.

http://www.symplur.com/healthcare-hashtags/foamems/
Results

During the study period, there were over 42,000 tweets containing #FOAMems, generated by over 6,000 participants.

These tweets resulted in over 60 million impressions or potential views by others.

Figure 1: Categories of tweets based on content (n=2759)
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![Categories of tweets based on content](image)

- **Cardiac**: 24%
- **Leadership/Education**: 19%
- **Trauma**: 14%
- **ECG**: 9%
- **Airway/Resp.**: 8%
- **Pediatrics**: 7%
- **Capnography**: 6%
- **Spinal Imm.**: 5%
- **HEMS**: 5%
- **Environmental**: 4%
- **MH**: 4%
- **Ultrasound**: 3%
- **Other**: 2%

**Figure 1**: Categories of tweets based on content (n=2759)
The top 92 tweeters of #FOAMems during this period were analysed for professional qualification or professional identity. Of these 92 individuals, 52% were paramedics (n=48).

Tweets were also categorized based on content, source (original tweet or retweet) and whether they linked to referenced material or not.

Figure 2: Source (original vs. retweet) & reference (referenced vs. not referenced)
Conclusions

- Paramedics are engaging with both clinical and non-clinical content on Twitter using #FOAMems, with the majority of tweets relating to clinical issues.
- Social media resources are widely tweeted and re-tweeted, which is in line with the FOAM movement’s philosophy.
- Opportunities exist for paramedics to share further clinical, educational and technical knowledge supported by referenced material.

FOAM – Free Open Access Meducation – Medical education for anyone, anywhere, anytime.