

Genetic Counselling and Education

AB083. Social media with cartoon characters as a powerful tool for expanding medical education and raising awareness of rare genetic diseases

Thipwimol Tim-Aroon¹, Suphatcharee Leklab², Marin Satawiriya³, Sirima Ketsuwan³, Duangrurdee Wattanasirichaigoon¹

¹Division of Medical Genetics, Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand; ²Hua-Hin Hospital, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand; ³Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand

Background: Collective patients suffering from >6,000 rare disease (RD) are 6–10% of population. Eighty percent of RD has genetic etiology. The ratio of geneticists to Thai population is 1:4.5 million. RD patients are usually first seen by general physicians/pediatrician. Due to broad spectrum of manifestation of RD and the lack of awareness of RD, delay or misdiagnosis of RD is common. Social media provides convenient access to information, overcoming geographic and time limitation. Cartoons attract all generations and ease communication of complex information into a simple and friendly manner.

Methods: A Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rarenadoo) was created using Thai language in order to increase

awareness and distribute understanding of RD among Thai trainees and general physicians/pediatricians. Two clinical geneticists, an intern, and two Pediatric residents teamed up to develop stories of RD, then have it narrated by cartoon characters. Numbers of total page likes (TPL) and people reached represent the number of subscribers or people viewing the page on a regularly basis. Summary of subscriber's gender, age, city and country of log in is only accessible to the page administrator. Personal data of subscribers were not disclosed.

Results: Since the initial Facebook post in July 2016, TPL reached 2,000 in the first week and 4,000 at the end of first month. As of July 2017, >6,600 people subscribed, and >8,100 people reached the posts. Eighty-three percent of subscribers aged 18–34 years. Ninety-five percent of subscribers are from Thailand, including Bangkok and big cities such as Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, Nakhon Ratchasima, Songkhla, and Yala. The subscribers were also accessed from other countries including Laos, China, the Philippines, and the United States.

Conclusions: In a country with few geneticists, medical education through social media with cartoons is a simple and effective tool to expand knowledge and raise awareness among health personnel.

Keywords: Social media; rare diseases (RDs); medical education

doi: 10.21037/atm.2017.s083

Cite this abstract as: Tim-Aroon T, Leklab S, Satawiriya M, Ketsuwan S, Wattanasirichaigoon D. Social media with cartoon characters as a powerful tool for expanding medical education and raising awareness of rare genetic diseases. *Ann Transl Med* 2017;5(Suppl 2):AB083. doi: 10.21037/atm.2017.s083