



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## Educating dental students on social media ethics

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### Abstract

**Background:** Ethics is essential in healthcare, including dentistry, to help dentists do the right things, build trust, and take good care of patients, but even though dentists learn about ethics, they still have some ethical problems, like sharing patient pictures without permission or criticizing other dentists on social media. Teaching ethics practically and interestingly could help them use ethical rules better in their work.

**Objective:** To explain the better teaching mechanism about ethics to dental students, especially when using social media.

**Methods:** Data was expected from dental medicine students at Airlangga University, who were taught ethics using four methods: conventional lectures, group discussions, paper assignments, and creating educational videos.

**Results:** After completing the ethics class, students are expected to apply ethical principles as co-assistant doctors, extending to their use of social media.

**Conclusion:** discussion-based classes significantly prepared dental medicine students for their roles as co-assistant doctors, fostering dynamic idea exchange, critical thinking, and practical application of ethical knowledge, especially when using social media.

**Keywords:** Educating Dental Student; Dental Ethics; Teaching Methods; Ethics; Bioethics

### 1. Introduction

Social media refers to various websites and apps on the internet where people can create, share, and discover content. There are many types of social media. For examples, Facebook, YouTube, X (former Twitter) and Instagram. While they all let you share things, each platform is different in how it is set up and who uses it. So, even though they have some things in common, like posting and sharing, they also have unique features and attract different types of users. This makes social media a diverse and interesting way for people to connect and share online freely [1].

Nowadays, most of people should have social media not only just to share and upload daily activities, but also use to make personal branding, advertising, and finding newest information. In fact, 80% people in the world using social media. It becomes a trend on society, especially on students. Students often feel like they need to be on social media because it is seen as something important for this generation. Almost everyone knows about social media nowadays. It plays a big role in our lives, affecting education and being a common topic for teenagers to talk about. Social media has a strong impact on people, making someone who was not well-known become popular, and the other way around [2].

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A study conducted by Kolhar *et al* (2021) on 300 students about 17 to 29 years old in Prince Sattam bin Abdul Aziz University shows that 97% of student used social media. But, only 1% of them use it for academical purpose. Rest of them, using it for general browsing, communication, etc. Surprisingly, 57% of them have addicted to social media. As we can see, using social media can be a habit for student even after graduating from their university or school and become professionals [3].

Later, when the student become a professional, content their shared become very important because it can influence others. A lot of people on the internet can get information, but not everyone really understands or makes sense of it. Many folks are still swayed by information that has not been proven true. People who are active on social media often cause different kinds of problems. A survey by Microsoft showed that in Indonesia, people's behavior online is unproper. In fact, out of 32 countries surveyed, Indonesia ranked 29<sup>th</sup> and was the least good in the Southeast Asia region. To solve it, the social media creators have to learn and implement ethics in sharing information or contents wisely [4].

Generally, the term "ethics" stems from the Greek word "ethos" or "moral" and is rooted in the Latin term "mores," which serves to govern an individual's character and behavior [5]. Ethics is a systematic reflection on moral decisions and behavior. It involves rational criteria that guide individuals in choosing specific actions over others. Unlike morality, which focuses on actions and values shaped by authority or role models, Ethics is about thinking deeply and understanding why something is right or wrong. It is like exploring the reasons behind the rules and making thoughtful decisions. It deals with questions of what is right and wrong, just and unjust, and provides a framework for evaluating actions and their moral implications. While morality is fixed and unarguable, ethics is characterized by ongoing debates and discussions about ethical principles and choices [6].

Ethics is vital in every field because it provides a framework for guiding behavior, fostering trust, and ensuring that actions are morally justifiable, including health workers. The ethics guidelines in healthcare strive to outline how professionals should behave while taking care of patients. Ethics in healthcare plays a crucial role by emphasizing patient-centered care, informed consent, confidentiality, and equitable treatment. It promotes a doctor-patient relationship built on trust, honesty, and shared decision-making, enabling patients to participate in their treatment plans actively. Upholding principles of justice and fairness, ethical healthcare professionals work to address disparities in access to care and advocate for policies that ensure equal treatment for all and that doctors give fair treatment or service to all patients, no matter who they are. In other words, behaving ethically is extremely important in healthcare and is crucial to delivering top-notch patient services [7]. That is why healthcare workers must know ethics and applied to daily lives, including when using social media. Cross sectional study Gandhi *et al* (2022) shows that among 404 dentists, 68.3% dentists tend to have professional account as a dentist which are more than a half of dentist want to have social media account with professional purpose. It is a positive thing when dentist knows ethics and regulation, but if they do not, it will be the opposite [8].

Although there are many laws regulating the ethical profession of doctors, there are many ethical problems, specifically in dentistry. Nowadays, everyone, including dentists, can use social media, which has both good and bad impacts. Few dentists upload "before and after" of patient photos. Sharing patient images without consent violates the fundamental principles of patient confidentiality and undermines the dentist-patient relationship's ethical foundation. Such actions could lead to severe consequences, eroding patient trust, tarnishing the dentist's professional reputation, and potentially resulting in legal repercussions. In another case, criticizing another dentist's work is also not professional and ethical. It undermines the profession's collaborative nature and erodes the trust and camaraderie necessary for effective patient care. Because of that, the dental education curriculum should not only teach essential clinical knowledge, technical skills, and practical abilities but also instill the values and attitudes that define the profession. It would benefit students to learn about the reasons behind moral decisions and understand the prominent ethical stances in dentistry [9].

In fact, most dentist has taken an ethics class in their colleges, but there is still an ethical problem. Ethical education aims to provide students with a solid foundation in understanding and navigating complex moral dilemmas they might encounter in their professional careers. However, if the teaching methods are not engaging, comprehensive, or tailored to real-life scenarios, students might not fully internalize the knowledge and principles. As a result, they will be oriented to score, not knowledge, which makes them struggle to apply theoretical ethics to practical situations, leading to ethical issues even after their formal education. Improving the teaching method for ethics could be the best option to solve this problem.

## 2. Method

Data were taken from undergraduate dental medicine students from the Faculty of Dental Medicine, Airlangga University. Ethics class in the Faculty of Dental Medicine Airlangga University will be delivered to third year students before they become co-assistant doctors in clinic which will interact with many patients. The ethics class has four teaching methods aiming to shape student basic knowledge and soft skills about ethics in dentistry: conventional lecture, discussion class, paper assignment, and making content videos to educate society.

Conventional teaching techniques or conventional lecture, commonly denoted as traditional or classical pedagogy, are instructional methods that have been extensively utilized in education over an extended period. These methods typically encompass an instructor-centered strategy, wherein the teacher is pivotal in disseminating content and information to the students. This method is intended to make basic knowledge about ethics for students. After that, students are expected to do discussions and other assignments.

Class discussion is a class in which the teacher and students express their opinions regarding a specific topic that was previously presented through a conventional lecture. Students are divided into a group with one tutor. So, when the student gets stuck, the tutor will help the student to reach a discussion point. Class discussions encourage more dynamic exchange of ideas, perspectives, and insights. This teaching method fosters critical thinking, active learning, and deeper understanding among students, usually from actual cases.

A paper assignment refers to a task given to students, typically in an academic setting, requiring them to write a research paper on a specific topic. Students are divided into groups of 2 – 3 people per group. Each group has different topics. The result of writing a paper published on blogs, popular media, and journals depends on the student. This assignment helps students practice thinking and researching carefully and teaches them how to share their ideas clearly with others. So, it is not just about writing. It is also about learning and showing what they have learned, which impacts society.

A video content assignment entails students creating a video on a specific topic about ethics. At least, the student must make two topics about ethics. This task involves comprehensive research, meticulous planning of the video's structure, scripting dialogues or voiceovers, recording relevant footage, and subsequently editing these elements into a cohesive final video. The scenario and narration depend on student creativity. Students can choose the video form, whether a short drama, podcast, or discussion. The maximum duration of the video is 10 minutes. Students must turn on the share link. So, everyone who has the link can access the video.

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## 3. Results



**Figure 1** Video project for the students to discuss ethical issues in dentistry

After taking ethics class, students are expected to be ready to be co-assistant doctors who apply ethics and norms in every aspect of their life, including when using social media. Participating in discussion-based classes stands out as an effective means to significantly enhance student intellectual prowess. Within this pedagogical framework, students transcend the role of passive recipients and actively engage in the learning process. The interchange of ideas and perspectives within a discussion setting cultivates not only critical thinking and problem-solving skills but also a profound understanding of the subject matter. Diverging from the traditional unidirectional flow of information, discussion classes foster an

interactive learning environment, where students can actively challenge and refine their thoughts through meaningful dialogue with their peers. This collaborative approach not only sharpens analytical acumen but also nurtures effective communication skills and promotes teamwork. In essence, the dynamic nature of discussion classes empowers students to delve more comprehensively into the subject matter, yielding a nuanced and thorough comprehension, equipping them not merely with knowledge but also the capability to apply their understanding adeptly in real-world scenarios. Also, in ethic class, it also has given an assignment to drop student opinion on ethic cases which initiate student critical thinking when facing ethical problems in the real situation with a well basic knowledge on it. In conclusion, student will not only know about the regulation for ethics, but also a basic norm without a formal regulation.

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#### **4. Discussion**

The results are expected from the diverse teaching methods in the ethics class for dental medicine students at Airlangga University demonstrate the effectiveness of incorporating discussion-based classes. The study aimed to prepare third-year students for their roles as co-assistant doctors, emphasizing the integration of ethical principles in their professional and personal lives.

The conventional lecture served as an initial step to establish a foundational understanding of ethics among students. It aimed to impart basic knowledge, setting the stage for further engagement through discussions and assignments. Conventional lectures are typically perceived as an instructional approach centered around the teacher, with the primary objective being the delivery of explanations from the educator to the students. It can be said that conventional lectures very important to build up student knowledge foundation before sharpening it on discussion [10].

The discussion classes, where students and tutors actively exchanged opinions on ethical topics, played a crucial role in enhancing intellectual capabilities. By encouraging dynamic conversations, this method fostered critical thinking, active learning, and a deeper grasp of ethical principles, often illustrated through real-life cases. In the study, the lecture-discussion method is a teaching approach carefully crafted to assist students in grasping a well-organized body of knowledge. This body of knowledge includes topics that link together facts, concepts, principles, and procedures, making the connections between them crystal clear and easy to understand. At the heart of the lecture-discussion method is a repetitive cycle, which involves presenting information, checking if students understand, and then integrating that knowledge. Once the first cycle is complete, a second one begins, followed by a third, and so on until the learning goals are met. Each cycle consists of a short presentation, checking to see if students grasp the information, presenting more details, and then integrating everything together. This method ensures that students not only receive information but also actively engage with and comprehend it thoroughly [11].

Assigning research papers on diverse ethical topics provided students with the opportunity to delve into specific subjects in a more comprehensive manner. Working in groups, they not only refined their research and writing skills but also contributed their insights to various platforms, reinforcing their understanding of ethical concepts. The creation of ethical-themed videos added a creative dimension to the learning process. This task required comprehensive research, planning, scripting, recording, and editing. It not only showcased students' understanding but also encouraged effective communication of complex ethical concepts in accessible formats. The results indicate that participation in discussion-based classes significantly contributed to enhancing students' critical thinking skills. Additionally, the assignment prompting students to express opinions on ethical cases initiated critical thinking when facing real-life ethical dilemmas. This approach went beyond theoretical knowledge, fostering the application of ethical principles in practical situations [12].

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#### **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the combination of teaching methods, with a notable emphasis on discussion-based classes, proved effective in preparing dental medicine students for their roles as co-assistant doctors, especially when using social media. The dynamic exchange of ideas, critical thinking opportunities, and practical applications of ethical knowledge demonstrated the holistic impact of incorporating discussion-based learning into the ethics curriculum.

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#### **Compliance with ethical standards**

##### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

There is no conflict of interest declared by authors in this study.

### Statement of Ethical approval

This article does not contain any experiment performed on animals/humans' subjects by any of the authors.

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### Authors Short Biography



**Dr Aqsa Sjuhada Oki** is an Associate Professor, and the head of Oral Biology Department at Universitas Airlangga. He has been teaching Medical Physiology and Oral Biology for over 25 years. Aqsa has great interests to explore the relationship of systemic disease and oral health, as well as teaching innovations and telemedicine. In his philosophy, elearning and telemedicine should come to bring more value for the institution in the aspects of education, research, and community development.