

**LETTER IN RESPONSE TO: "CJEM
DEBATE SERIES: #SOCIAL MEDIA –
SOCIAL MEDIA HAS CREATED
EMERGENCY MEDICINE CELEBRITIES
WHO NOW INFLUENCE PRACTICE
MORE THAN PUBLISHED EVIDENCE"**

To the editors: "A point of view can be a dangerous luxury when substituted for insight and understanding."—Marshall McLuhan

We thank the editors for prompting a debate on the merits and failings of published research and social media. Perhaps the heated and, at times, personal tone of the published debate was intended to draw attention and stimulate discussion. The publication is successful on those terms, but the authors present an unhelpful dichotomy. We share concerns that boring language, specialized methods, and glacial publication cycles would make some research inaccessible and

clinically irrelevant. We are equally concerned that social media can favour soundbites over sound analyses and breakthroughs over incremental discovery. Free Open Access Medicine (FOAM) and conventionally published evidence are both essential but equally fraught.

One option is to pit science and social media against one another, but that is not the only way. If the goal is to disseminate new knowledge, foster discussion, invite thoughtful comment, and improve patient care, we think emergency physicians should be as serious about podcasting as they are about conventional academic publication. Successful and promising academics and FOAMers should enjoy the same access to resources and the same opportunities for professional growth and promotion. We should create stronger expectations for transparency, collaboration, integrity, and professionalism from both conventional academics and FOAMers.

We should recognize differences, ask tough questions, and make an honest effort to appreciate and address the strengths and everyday failings of our chosen methods and media.

The future of knowledge creation and dissemination in emergency medicine is a dark one when the FOAMed and research community set out to undermine one another. Our potential is enormous when we work together.

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