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# **hcs m #hcsmeu #hcs mca etc. – twitter discussions on health and social media**

## mama

Two months ago, the meaning of this: #hcs m, #hcsmeu or #hcs mca would have been the greatest mystery to me. I now know of course that they are hashtags(#) for twitter discussions on topics under the umbrella of health care and social media. The concept is similar to that of the Twitter Journal Clubs. Once [...]

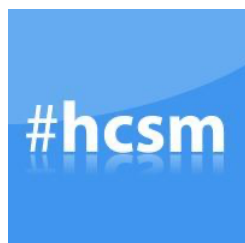
A few months ago, the meaning of this: #hcs m, #hcsmeu of #hcs mca would have been the greatest mystery to me. I now know of course that they are hashtags(#) for Twitter discussions on topics under the umbrella of **health care and social media**.

The concept is similar to that of the Twitter Journal Clubs. Once a week at a given time a discussion on an before hand agreed topic takes place. All who are interested are welcome to participate. All they have to do is be online, have a Twitter account and through tweets equipped with the appropriate hashtag share their views, opionons, articles etc. These kinds of discussions exits on a million topics I am sure. In this blog, I will write about a few of the most likely many health related Twitter discussions.

#hcs m is as mentioned above a discussion forum for health care and social media. it is focused on a global conversation, but there are several subgroups each focused on for example a specific geographical area such as **Europe**: #hcsmeu, **Latin America**: #hcsmla, **Canada**: #hcs mca and more.

I admit, that I have not yet been an active contributor to the scheduled discussions, but do enjoy the amazing thing about Twitter discussion: the open format and that everyone can follow it, also after it has taken place. In order to get myself a better overview of the #hcs m's I have come across until now I thought I'd just list them here. Mostly as a help to myself, but perhaps it would also be useful to others too. Therefore the blog format.

### **#hcs m – Healthcare Communications & Social Media**



**#hcs m** seems to have been the 'original'

hcs m. It is a weekly chat on Twitter held every Sunday night at 8pm Central Time. It was established in January 2009 as a way to bring individuals together to discuss health care and communications and social media – including doctors,

patients, lawyers, communicators, for-profits, non-profits, hospitals, health systems, insurers, and many more. The topic for each chat is decided by a moderator but based on suggestions from the participants which can be tweeted to **@HealthSocMed**. On the **website** it is possible to watch past live #hcsm streams (eg. **October 23**). The questions/topics cover a quite wide arrange of issues. Sometimes it is broad questions like *“Which disease/condition is receiving the most resources/attention/support via SM? Why? How can we reach more patients?”* But others are much more narrow: *“Advanced speech recognition (ie Siri for iPhones) is here – should automated health Q&As be monitored?”*. The relevance to Public Health Science Communication varies a lot of course. The main focus is health care and the role of patients. But sometimes the discussion topics s are indeed very Public Health relevant, eg. **“How do you prevent spread of misinformation during crises? How do you educate public to know who/what to trust online?”**

#hcsm has a **website/blog** and **Twitter hashtag**.  
**#hcsmeu – Healthcare Social Media in Europe**

#hcsmeu is a community of EU

healthcare blogger, twitterers and social media users. They describe themselves as a space for all healthcare enthusiasts to meet and converse, to post and share events, projects and initiatives within social media healthcare. The **main focus** is *patient centered*. The **mission** is to help drive forward the adaptation of social media can improve quality, access, value and effectiveness of health care delivery to patients. The hope is to increase the empowerment of patients in health prevention and disease recovery. #hcsmeu convene at noon UK time / 1pm central European time every Friday for a Twitter discussion of health care and social media.

#hcsmeu has a **website/blog**, a **Twitter hashtag**, are on

**Facebook and LinkedIn.**

In addition to the general hcsm for Europe, a number of countries have their own #hcsm discussions. These include **France** (**#hcsmeufr** in French), **Spain** (**#hcsmeues** in Spanish), **Austria** (only own website, uses #hcsm) and **UK** (**#hcsmuk** also has a **daily collection** of links)

**#hcsma – Healthcare Social Media in Canada**

I thought I'd also just list #hcsma, since

Canadian Universities seem to be very much one of the frontrunners in linking public health and social media. Health Care Social Media Canada was inspired by the success of **#hcsm** and **#hcsmeu**. Like the bigger #hcsm, Healthcare Social Media Canada also hosts a weekly **tweet chat** which takes place on Wednesdays at 1pm EST. Again, the focus is primarily on the patient and relation between patient and health care provider. Transcripts of past chats in can be found in **a Transcripts Collection** where the content of is searchable. The #hcsma also has monthly meetups across Canada where the participants can meet in person. #hcsma have **website/blog** and can be found on **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**.

**#hcsmanz – Health Care Social Media Australia and New Zealand [added to this blog 27. October 2011]**

#hcsmanz is Australia and New Zealand's

version of #hcsm discussion groups. It is of course primarily aimed at interested professionals working with health related issues in Australia and New Zealand. The concept is the same with a weekly discussion on Twitter using the hashtag **#hcsmanz**. The discussion takes place every Sunday evening on Twitter at 22:00NZ, 20:00AEDT, 19:00AEST, 19:30ACDT, 17:00AWST. Transcripts from the discussion are available **here**. See the below comment to this blog post to

read more about the #hcsmanz's discussions and the main areas of focus which is influenced by the large distances and geographically layout of e.g. Australia, why rural health and equity is a common theme for the discussions.

#hcsmanz can be found on **Facebook** and there is a **The #hcsmanz Daily** collecting the relevant links shared via the hashtag.

**#hcsmla – Health Care Social Media Latin America  
[added to this blog 27. October 2011]**

#hcsmla covers Latin America and is

naturally a discussion conducted in Spanish mainly. It started with a beta version in November 2010 and is therefore approaching its one year anniversary. As my Spanish skills are still not strong enough to read and follow discussions I encourage you to visit **[www.hcsmla.com](http://www.hcsmla.com)**. The concept is the same with a weekly discussion on Twitter using the hashtag **#hcsmla**. The discussions take place every Tuesday evening (for the specific time check the **website**). Transcripts from the discussion are available **from there website**.

#hcsmla can be found on **Facebook** and on their **website/blog**.

**#hcsmasia – Health Care Social Media Asia [added to this blog 27. October 2011]**

Also Asia have their geographic twitter discussion on health care and social media under the #hcsmasia. It is used for people interested in following news, blogs, and tweets regarding healthcare information in Asia and the use of the internet and Social Media. The concept is the same with a weekly discussion on Twitter using the hashtag **#hcsmasia**. #hcsmasia has a monthly twitter chat every first Tuesday of the month at 9 pm JPT. Based on a quick view it does not seem to be as actively used as many of the other #hcsms, but is also one of the most recent having been establish in February 2011.

**#hcsmasia** can be found on **Facebook** and on their **website**.  
**#hcsmglobal – Health Care Social Media Global [added to this blog 27. October 2011]**

In addition to regional hcsms there is a discussion group that calls itself **#hcsmglobal**. They tweet under the hashtag **#hcsmglobal** and aim to bring together people from different chapters health care social media discussions happening to discuss once a month. Unfortunately I haven't been able to find out exactly when these monthly discussions take place, so follow the hashtag.

**#hcsmglobal** can be found on **Facebook**, their **website** and there is a **The #hcsmglobal Daily** collecting the relevant links shared via the hashtag.

**Lots of other social media and Twitter based discussion groups out there**

There are lots and lots of other hashtags, discussion forums out there. It is really quite a jungle. For me it is a little bit trial and error to find out which ones are relevant for me to follow. **#hitsm** (Health IT Social Media) is for example sometimes interesting to follow, but also quite heavily IT focused. I have earlier blogged about the **Twitter Journal Clubs** which are also examples of Twitter forums for discussions of public health related issues in a virtual

discussion group. As mentioned

earlier, **LinkedIn** also have many groups for linking and raising discussions on public health issues. The possibilities are enormous, so I guess it is mostly a question of trying it out and find out which groups suits one's needs.

**Why use #hcsm, #hcsmeu or #hcsorca when you are on Twitter?**

Apart from the scheduled discussions which many of these Twitter discussions groups have, it is also possible to use the

hashtags outside the discussions when you are writing about something relevant to the topic health care communication & social media. So why should you do that? Well **#hcs mca** **have listed some of the reasons**, which I take the liberty of sharing with the rest of you in a slightly moderated version

- **Share and inform**: Tell others about the great stuff you've read or are doing.
- **Broadcast good stuff**: Don't be shy. If you've got something you want to get out there, leverage the #hcs m/#hcs mca/#hcsmeu communities and get the word out about your new initiative, your latest blog post or an upcoming conference or event.
- **Ask questions**: Adding #hcs m/#hcs mca/#hcsmeu to your question lets you tap into the collective intelligence of a community that is further reaching than any single set of followers.
- **Request participation**: If you're looking for people to contribute comments, opinions or ideas, the Twitter discussion groups gives easy access to a broad range of people
- **Expand your network**: Participate in #hcs m/#hcs mca/#hcsmeu conversations any time and find people you want to follow and be found by others. This could be a way to connect with people you would normally not have access to
- **Twitter filter**: Use it as a Twitter filter to make sure that tweets are relevant to your area of interest
- **Stay current**: Get to know of new articles, initiative, projects, news quickly

I am trying to find the balance of which to follow and it is in the beginning a little time-consuming, but interesting indeed and a world one should be aware of. There are lots of people and insights to be found.

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