



# E-learning on the road

Alan M. Batt<sup>1-4</sup>, Niamh M. Cummins<sup>4</sup>

1. Fanshawe College, London, ON, Canada; 2. Centre for Paramedic Education and Research, Hamilton Health Sciences, ON, Canada; 3. National Ambulance LLC, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; 4. Centre for Prehospital Research, Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick, Ireland.

# Introduction

- The impact of social media and online learning in health professions education has previously shown generally positive results in medical, nursing and pharmacy students.
- To date there has not been any extensive research into social media and online learning use by prehospital health care professionals such as paramedics.
- We sought to identify the extent to which Irish pre-hospital practitioners make use of online learning and social media for continuing professional competency (CPC), and the means by which they do so.



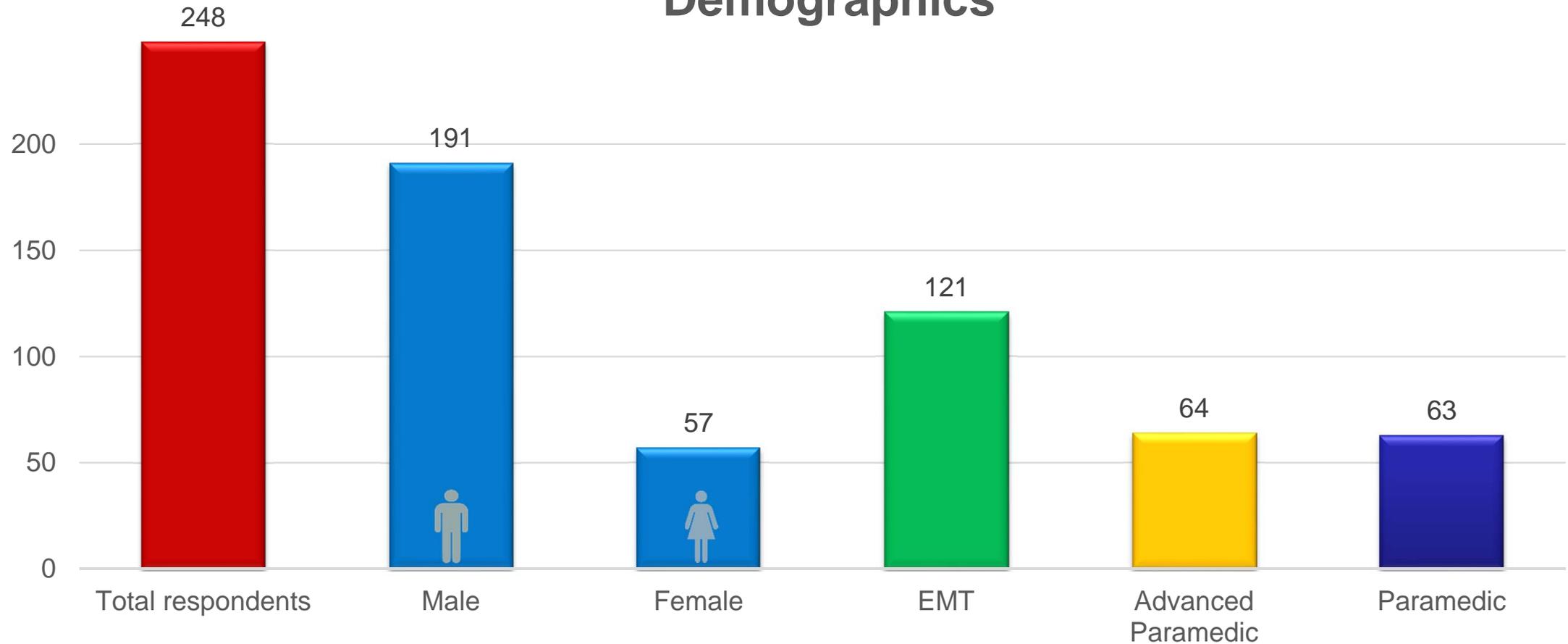
# Materials and Methods

- A cross-sectional online survey of practitioners was conducted to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data.
- No previous questionnaires investigating paramedics or other healthcare professions similar use of social media for continuous professional development or competency were identified in the literature.
- Nationwide ethics approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of University Hospitals Limerick, Limerick, Ireland.
- The release of the survey was in a controlled manner to PHECC registrants via various channels.
- Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

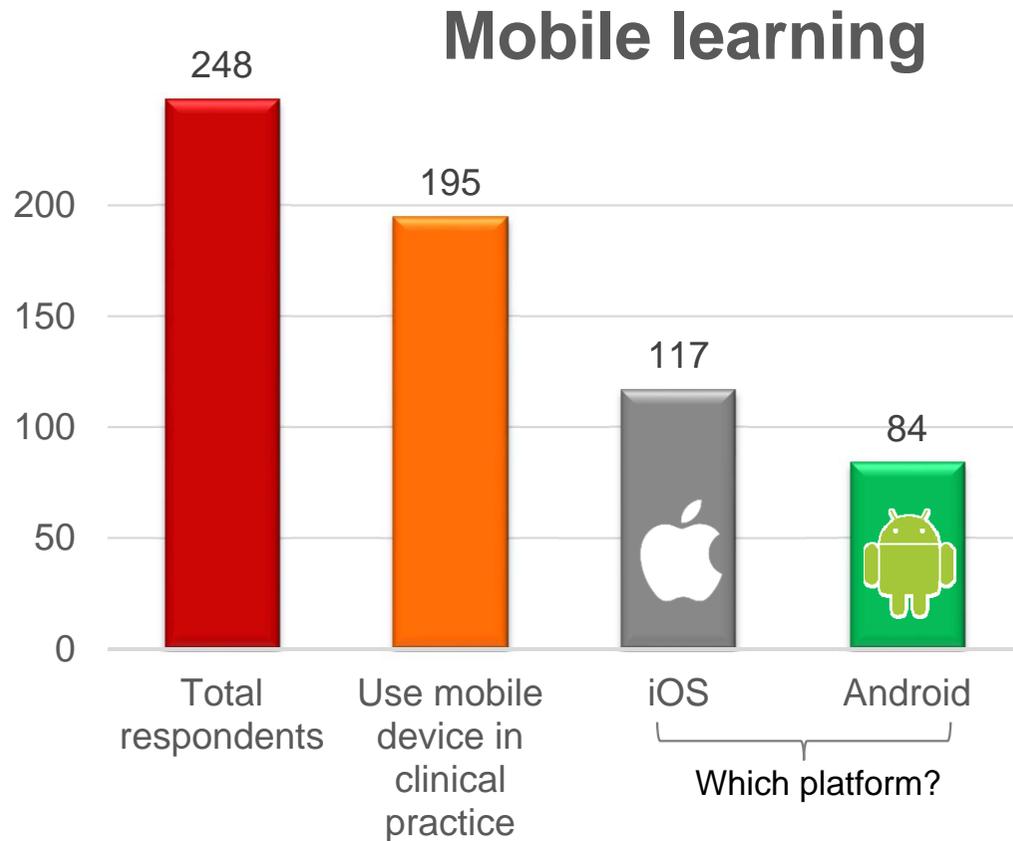


# Demographic Results

## Demographics



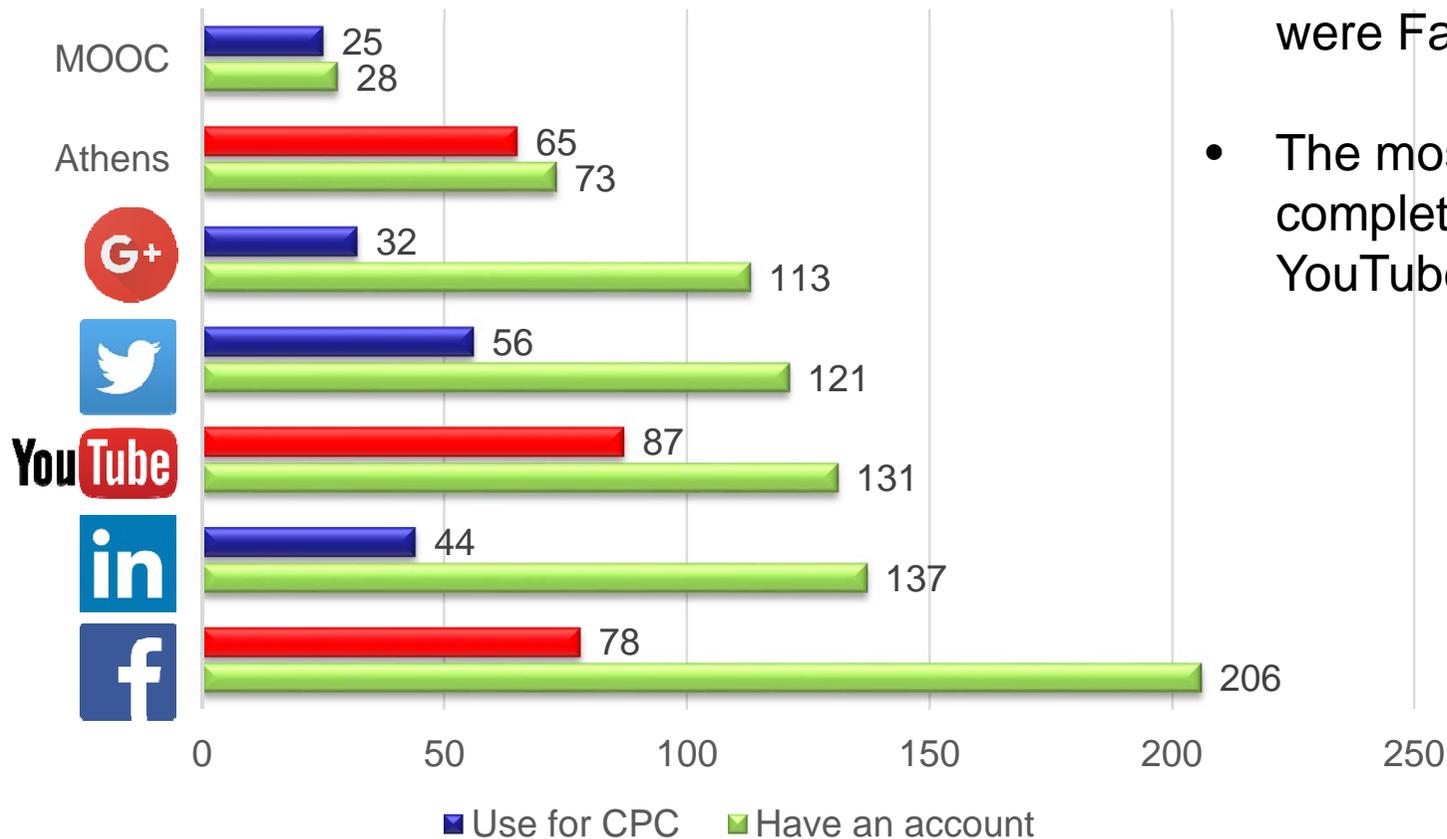
# E-Learning Results



- A total of 248 respondents completed the survey in full, representing 5.4% of all registrants at the time ( $n=4,555$ ).
- Social media and online learning were considered learning tools by over 75% of respondents.
- The majority of respondents (88%) viewed self-directed activities to constitute continuous professional development activity.
- Over 90% of respondents had previous experience with online learning.

# Social Media Results

## Account use

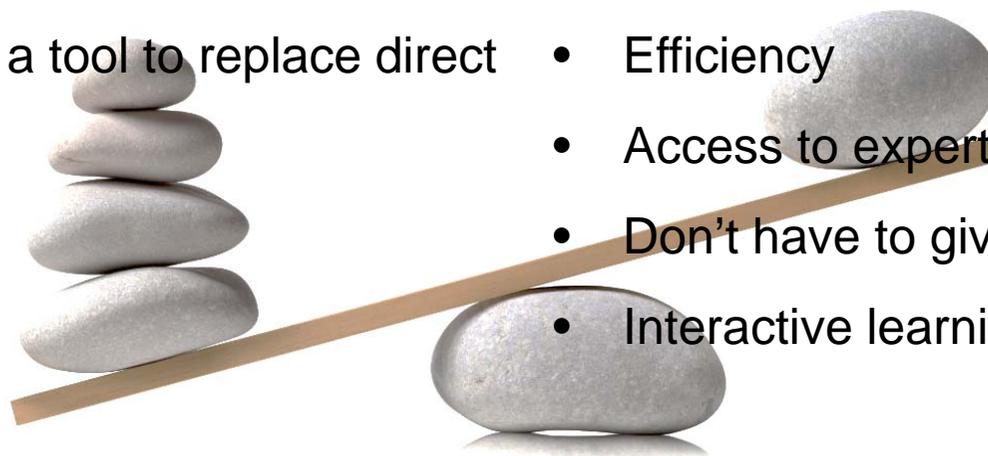


- The most commonly used platforms were Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube
- The most popular platforms for completing CPC activities were YouTube, Facebook and Athens.

# Perceptions

## Disadvantages to online learning

- Can lack structure
- IT skills vary
- Broadband access in rural Ireland is an issue
- Not peer-reviewed
- Management see it as a tool to replace direct learning
- Easy to lose focus



## Advantages to online learning

- Ease of access
- Asynchronous learning
- Self-paced
- Consistency
- Efficiency
- Access to experts of all levels
- Don't have to give up "personal time"
- Interactive learning

# Conclusions

- Prehospital practitioners in Ireland in the population studied consider online learning and social media acceptable for CPC purposes.
- Practitioners consider online learning that awards a certificate to be better value than self-directed activities.
- Many Irish prehospital practitioners already use smartphones and tablets during their everyday clinical practice, and providing learning and CPC resources that can be accessed using these devices will make it easier for practitioners to maintain current competency.
- The main social media outlets used by PHECC registrants are YouTube and Facebook.
- The results of this study can be used to ensure educational interventions are targeted at practitioners through the correct channels, and barriers are eliminated or overcome.