

Facilitating Paramedic Continuous Professional Competency - The #IrishEMS Chat

ABSTRACT

Social Media is growing in popularity, quickly becoming the go to medium for keeping up to date, collaborating, networking & sharing knowledge. In November 2015 we registered a hashtag, #IrishEMS, with the express aim of hosting a one hour chat each Monday night. While it was open to all and its success relied upon international and multidisciplinary contributors, the hashtag was chosen to give it a focus based in Irish prehospital guidelines and Irish EMS practice.

The purpose of this study was to outline the objective of the hashtag #IrishEMS and to offer insight into the extent of its reach. We hypothesised that practitioners in Ireland and abroad contributed to, and benefited from this venture. It remains our view that this simple measure is a valid source of verifiable continuous professional competency (CPC) for practitioners.

An analytical report of all tweets containing the hashtag #IrishEMS was generated from the date of registration of the hashtag. This allowed for analysis of impact using several variables such as number of tweets, impressions etc. Transcripts and the analytics of each Monday night's chat were analysed to explore the number of contributions, the overall reach of these tweets and the professional background of the participants.

In the study period from November 2015 to June 2016, we recorded over 6,000 tweets which included the hashtag #IrishEMS. A total of 590 contributors from a range of healthcare professions and voluntary backgrounds were involved with a total potential reach of almost 7 million users. Topics of discussion varied from clinical, to leadership, to service delivery and professional development issues. The majority of participants involved in each chat were National Ambulance Service EMTs, Paramedics and Advanced Paramedics.


#IrishEMS chats encouraged practitioners to engage with prehospital topics with an Irish perspective. An opportunity exists for individuals to record chats with a similar focus as the #IrishEMS chats, on a regular basis, either electronically or simply by printing a transcript of the discussion as evidence of continuing professional competency activity.

PRESENTED

As an oral presentation at the EMS Gathering in Killarney on June 8th, 2016 by James Ward.

SOURCE

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