Are University Libraries Supporting Medical Student Wellness?
An Exploration of Library Social Media

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INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries that support medical schools must provide certain services that are in line with Canadian accreditation standards. These twelve standards are overseen by the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools. Standard #12 pertains to medical student health and well-being.

To strengthen the library's role in the accreditation process, we explored if academic libraries that support medical schools are promoting student wellness.

METHODS

We conducted a scan of social media accounts for all medical school campus libraries across Canada. This included libraries that are supporting students at satellite medical school campuses. We preferred to focus on the health sciences libraries (HSL) at each campus, but in the absence of an HSL we monitored the next most relevant library or the main campus library.

Instagram, **Facebook**, and **Twitter** accounts were checked daily during the months of **November 2018** and **February 2019**.

Posts were collected then coded using up to three themes identified in the *Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms*. These themes were pre-determined after speaking with medical school student affairs professionals to develop a list of wellness topics to look for when scanning posts. We also designated posts as **active** or **passive**, and determined if libraries were promoting a **service**, **event**, or **resource** that supports student wellness.

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During the months of November 2018 and February 2019, medical school libraries **actively** promoted **events** that focused largely on **recreation**, **animal-assisted therapy**, and positive **self-management**.

Medical School	Medical School Library Branch	Total: November	Total: February	Total: Feb+Nov
University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry	U of Alberta	11	22	33
Cumming School of Medicine	U Calgary	8	3	11
University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine	UBC	4	3	7
	UBCO	15	10	25
	UNBC	1	0	1
	U Vic (UBC)	2	8	10
University of Manitoba College of Medicine	U Manitoba	3	1	4
Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Medicine	Memorial U	2	0	2
Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine	Dalhousie U	0	18	18
	UNB (Dalhousie)	0	0	0
Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine	McMaster U	5	7	12
	Brock U (McMaster)	2	1	3
Northern Ontario School of Medicine	NOSM	3	4	7
	Lakehead U (NOSM)	8	6	14
	Laurentian U (NOSM)	2	0	2
Queen's School of Medicine	Queens U	0	0	0
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry	U Windsor (Western)	11	8	19
	Western U	12	3	15
University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine	U Ottawa	5	6	11
University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine	U of Toronto	9	11	20
	UTM (U of T)	3	3	6
Université Laval Faculté de Médecine	U Laval	11	10	21
McGill University Faculty of Medicine	McGill U	21	38	59
Université de Montréal Faculté de Médécine	U de Montreal	8	7	15
Université de Sherbrooke Faculté de Médecine et des sciences de la santé	UQAC (Sherbrooke)	4	2	6
	Moncton (Sherbrooke)	0	2	2
	U de Sherbrooke	0	1	1
University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine	U Saskatchewan	3	9	12
	Totals	153	183	336

Table 1: Schools monitored and their number of posts.

RESULTS

The following themes were most common in the posts collected: Recreation (192 posts), animal-assisted therapy (69), and self-management (45) (see Figure 1). Libraries were most likely to actively promote initiatives (233 posts were active and 103 were passive). Posts collected also indicated that libraries were mostly promoting events (223 posts), followed by resources (98 posts), then services (15 posts) that support student wellness.
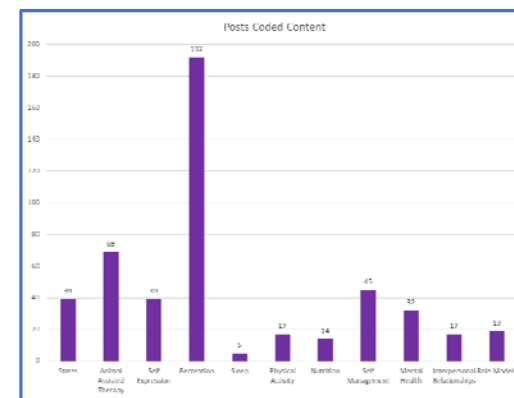

Figure 1: Themes used and their frequency in the collected posts

DISCUSSION

There is some evidence to show that medical school libraries are engaged in promoting medical student wellness.

This project had a number of confounding variables such as data being dependent on communications practices at libraries, our choice in which libraries to monitor, time of year when data was collected (i.e. do some libraries support wellness more in months we didn't explore), and librarian involvement in wellness initiatives in undocumented ways.

The future direction for this project will involve a survey of librarians to hear first-hand how they are supporting student wellness at their libraries.