

# A Hysterectomy in the time of Social Media:

## A Pilot study on Patient-Reported Outcome Measures

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### Introduction

Within the last decade, the omnipresence of technology is transforming the provision, as well as consumer access, to health care. There is also growing acknowledgement that patient-related outcome measures (PROM) can provide valuable insight into various aspects of health care provision. Social media, a potent enabler of two-way communication, can play a pivotal part in translating PROMs into a language that can assist medical professionals make improvements where required, to truly provide high calibre, 'patient centred care'. This study was designed to gauge the ability of social media to divulge PROMs that could provide valuable insight into the multi-dimensional nature of a patient's peri-operative course in relation to having a hysterectomy.

### Methodology

Aim: To assess if there are common concerns being raised on social media regarding the peri-operative experience by women either awaiting or having recently undergone a hysterectomy.

Hypothesis: We hypothesise that women ask questions on hysterectomy-related support groups on social media because there is a deficiency in current peri-operative counselling content.

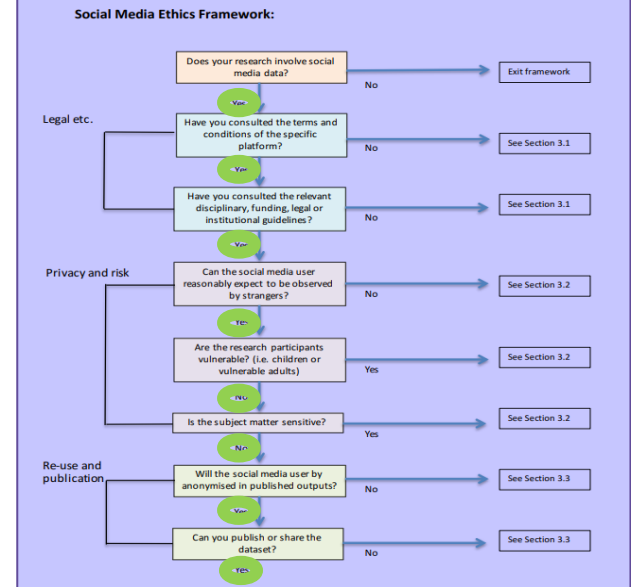
Study population:

- Hysterectomy related support groups on Facebook
- Women considering/ awaiting/ having undergone a hysterectomy

Consent:

- Not practical to pursue individual consent given nature of study
- A Framework for ethical research in social media (Fig 1.) was consulted.
- Subsequently, a waiver of consent was granted under the low-risk category (LNR HREC/ 2023/ QGC/ 97485)

### 3 Framework for ethical research with social media data



### Results

Two groups were analysed in this Pilot study.

Group 1: almost 500 posts available within 6 weeks with the content as follows: 17% updates on progress, 11% *what to expect post-op*, 11% *Anxiety about the operation*, cumulatively ~30% *about post-op concerns: abdo pain, PV bleeding, limits of* : ~250 posts analysed with the abbreviated content as follows: ~14% *what to expect post-op*, ~13% *what to expect post-op*, ~6% *anxiety about the operation*, cumulatively ~15% *about post-op concerns as above*.

Common themes already identified:

ADLS, return to exercise etc.

Group 2 Women expressing confusion or lack of knowledge on what to expect in the post-operative period with regard to their recovery

- Women expressing a sense of anxiety about having or having had a hysterectomy despite very much wanting one as well as a sense of grief and loss post-surgery
- Recurrent questions about physical symptoms in the post-operative period

### Discussion

There is value in extending this study to as many accessible hysterectomy-related groups on social media to get complete representation of the issues expressed.

Incorporating the feedback gained from this study has the potential to significantly influence and ideally optimize the provision of contemporary, patient-centred care in the context of women undergoing a hysterectomy.

**Providing patient-centric care is then expected to lead to quantifiable, measurable benefits such as improved patient-satisfaction scores as well as fewer hospital visits or readmissions which in turn is known to reduce health care costs.**

### References

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