

The State of the Blog: The First Year of eAJKD

Just over a year ago, *AJKD* launched an official blog, *eAJKD* (www.eajkd.org). The impetus was to provide a platform that could be more flexible, interactive, accessible, and nimble than the online repository of articles available at the journal's website, www.ajkd.org. This was a substantial and novel undertaking, as at the time, no nephrology journals had blogs and, even today, only 9% of general internal medicine journals with an impact factor greater than 4.0 operate blogs.¹ As we begin our second full year of blog operations, we look back at the goals that motivated us and anticipate the future of this growing venture.

When the opportunity arose to create and launch *eAJKD*, we jumped at the chance to lend our expertise as both nephrologists and bloggers. The majority of our team already had experience contributing to nephrology blogs and using Twitter and other social media.^{2,3} At the same time, we were keen to leverage the extensive experience of the *AJKD* editorial team in review and management of content. Merging these two mindsets, we developed a blogging workflow that involves coordinated review of all posts by both the Blog Editor (Dr Jhaveri) and the journal's Education Editor (Dr Scott Gilbert). This process helped us focus on quality and educational value as the overarching goals for the blog.

In first developing the mission for *eAJKD*, we determined that a central aim would be to produce posts that enriched journal content by providing a more personal, interactive way for readers to engage with articles. As a result, a key component of the blog is interviews with authors of selected *AJKD* articles. Most of these are provided in written Q&A format, but we have also taken advantage of the multimedia capabilities of the blog to post audio and video interviews. In each interview we conduct, we tailor open-ended questions to give authors the opportunity to discuss their article and research in depth. We have been gratified that so many authors have accepted our invitation to participate and to share their research beyond the confines of the printed page. We have enjoyed the opportunity to meet the people behind the research, and to help bring readers closer to authors.

In addition to interviews, we strive to post a variety of content, including timely commentaries, interactive teaching tools, and meeting coverage. While the editorials that appear in each issue of the print journal typically provide detailed analysis of Original Investigations, blog commentaries offer perspectives on a wider range of *AJKD* content, often appearing as soon as the article is published online. In addition, the blog

features rapid commentaries on nephrology news and policy; for example, in August 2012, Dr Barry Straube, former Chief Medical Officer of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, shared his perspective on the US Supreme Court's decision on the Affordable Care Act. *eAJKD*'s interactive posts, such as quizzes, puzzles, and polls, are inspired by journal content and are created to engage and educate readers. We also introduced blog-based meeting coverage to provide a service for readers to follow and discuss meeting activities. Our first coverage highlighted research news and presentations from the National Kidney Foundation's 2012 Spring Clinical Meetings. Since then, we have covered 3 other conferences, including the American Society of Nephrology's 2012 Kidney Week.

In our first year, we created over 150 posts, which include 51 interviews, 19 commentaries, 56 posts of meeting coverage, 12 quizzes, 6 puzzles, and 7 polls. Our most widely viewed features are quizzes and meeting coverage, and our most popular post occurred on World Kidney Day 2012 when we invited nephrologists to share what inspired them to choose nephrology (see Box 1 for the blog's top 10 posts).

During this inaugural year, we have worked to increase awareness of the blog. It should come as no surprise that social media has played an integral part in spreading the word about *eAJKD*. Because Twitter has been shown to successfully disseminate medical information,⁴ we started a feed for the blog (@eAJKD, twitter.com/eajkd). In addition to using Twitter to alert followers to new blog posts, we integrated our Twitter feed into the meeting coverage of the 2012 Spring

Box 1. Top Ten Most Viewed Posts on eAJKD

1. Nephrology: A Revival for 2012
2. Sulodexide in Diabetic Nephropathy: Is There a Role for This Novel Agent?
3. The Nephrologists and the Internet!
4. Dialysis and Heparin: What's the Evidence?
5. Test Your Knowledge: Myeloma and the Kidney
6. ANCA-Associated Kidney Disease: Secondary Causes
7. Heparin or Citrate: What is the Evidence?
8. Will Home Hemodialysis Ever Prosper in the United States?
9. Newer Anemia Therapies
10. Metabolic Alkalosis: What Is the Cause?

Note: Data as of November 7, 2012.

Address correspondence to Kenar D. Jhaveri, MD, Hofstra NSLIJ School of Medicine Great Neck, NY 11021. E-mail: kjhaveri@nshs.edu

© 2012 by the National Kidney Foundation, Inc.
0272-6386/\$36.00
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.ajkd.2012.10.013>

Clinical Meetings. During the conference, followers received 137 original Twitter messages (tweets) that focused on providing informative highlights from meeting sessions and posters. Readers responded and, notably, the number of *eAJKD* Twitter followers increased by about 18% during the meeting. In addition to broadcasting the blog through the @*eAJKD* Twitter feed, we share all posts to the journal's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ajkdonline), which reaches over 1,400 individuals. This social media mix has been successful in increasing awareness of the blog, as Twitter and Facebook are now among the top ten ways readers are referred to the blog.

The results of our effort to build a readership have been heartening, as the number of page views per month more than doubled from November 2011 to October 2012, and continues to climb. As we hoped, our visitors span the nephrology community, with polling suggesting that 50% are board-certified nephrologists, 27% are renal fellows, 19% are medical residents, and 3% are medical students. Although currently most of our readers are from the United States, our international readership is growing, with India, United Kingdom, Canada, Spain, and the Philippines sending the most visitors to date.

Thanks to the diligent work and enthusiasm of the entire blog team, *eAJKD* is off to a great start. We have shown that a blog can complement the mission of *AJKD* by providing a timely, engaging forum for the nephrology community with original content related to journal articles in the form of interviews, diverse perspectives, and educational material. For readers who are not yet subscribers or may not have the time to read a journal article in full, the free availability and convenience of accessing blog content provides an easy means to keep up with the most clinically relevant journal content.

However, the internet is not static and nor shall we be. We are determined to build upon the foundation that has been set in this successful first year. With the start of our second year, we seek to direct our enthusiasm towards expanding the types of content on *eAJKD*. In particular, because we believe that the internet can be a powerful educational tool, we will offer even more interactive teaching material. On the heels of our successful work at 4 conferences in 2012, another goal will be to expand our coverage of nephrology conferences and other meetings. We also want to reach out to the global nephrology community. To help us accomplish these goals, we have begun recruiting blog contributors and plan to expand the team by inviting international team members (view the mem-

bers of the current team at ajkdblog.org/meet-the-team). We hope that these changes will further improve the experience and discussions on the blog, and will continue to build the *eAJKD* community.

As we look ahead, we would love your feedback. Let us know how we're doing, and what you want to see more of on *eAJKD*. Please share your suggestions with us at ajkd@tuftsmedicalcenter.org. We look forward to seeing you on the blog!

**Tejas Desai, MD,¹ Matthew A. Sparks, MD²
Vinay Nair, DO,³ Sidharth Kumar Sethi, MD⁴
Joel Topf, MD,⁵ Kellie Calderon, MD⁶
Elizabeth Bury, MFA,⁷ Kenar D. Jhaveri, MD⁶**

¹East Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina

²Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina

³Mount Sinai School of Medicine
New York, New York

⁴Medanta–The Medicity Hospital
Gurgaon, India

⁵St. John Hospital and Medical Center
Detroit, Michigan

⁶Hofstra North Shore–LIJ School of Medicine
Great Neck, New York

⁷Tufts Medical Center
Boston, Massachusetts

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank interviewees and guest contributors for sharing their invaluable perspectives with *eAJKD*. We also thank our new *eAJKD* colleagues for joining the team, and recognize Dr Scott Gilbert, Education Editor for *AJKD*, for his critical role in editing the blog's content.

Dr Jhaveri serves as the Editor of *eAJKD*, and Ms Bury serves as Associate Managing Editor of *AJKD*. The other authors are members of the *eAJKD* Advisory Board.

Financial Disclosure: Dr Jhaveri and Ms Bury receive support and salary, respectively, from the National Kidney Foundation as part of its funding for the *AJKD* editorial office. Dr Desai received support to attend the 2012 Spring Clinical Meetings in his capacity as an *eAJKD* Advisory Board member.

REFERENCES

1. Nair V, Khan S, Jhaveri KD. Interactive journals and the future of medical publications. *Am J Med.* 2012;125(10):1038-1042.
2. Sparks MA, O'Seaghdha CM, Sethi SK, Jhaveri KD. Embracing the internet as a means of enhancing medical education in nephrology. *Am J Kidney Dis.* 2011;58(4):512-518.
3. Desai T, Christiano C, Ferris M, Vachharajani T. Nephrology "e" learning made "e"asier. *Open Urol Nephrol J.* 2011;4:12-15.
4. Desai T, Shariff A, Shariff A, et al. Tweeting the meeting: an in-depth analysis of Twitter activity at Kidney Week 2011. *PLoS One.* 2012;7(7):e40253.