



## Doctors need to get above the noise on social media

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Doctors need to be active on social media and other communication platforms to offset the noise of the anti-science movement according to a visiting professor of anaesthesiology, Dr Ed Mariano from Stanford University in the US.

Dr Mariano is speaking at the New Zealand Anaesthesia Annual Scientific Meeting in Queenstown this week [August 21-24, 2019] on the role of social media and medicine. He says, there has been a growing anti-science movement and physicians have a moral imperative to stand up for science and evidence-based treatments.

“Surveys show that physicians are one of the most trusted professions in the eyes of the public. Yet most people in the world today get their information, including health information, from the internet. We have to be there to offset the noise,” he says. “We can’t ignore where our patients get their information, and we can join the conversation.”

Dr Mariano, who is one of the top 10 anaesthetists on twitter, says social media also offers a way for doctors to keep up-to-date with the latest research and new treatments. For example he cites the exponential growth of regional anaesthesia. Regional anaesthesia allows procedures to be done without the patient being unconscious and can provide targeted pain relief.

“We have more tools at our disposal. New blocks are being performed and described every month and it’s hard to keep up with the literature. Social media allows you to be part of a learning community made up of people who have similar interests and it can curate information for you,” he says.

Dr Mariano says it works the other way too. He says he’s created great collaborations through social media. “As well as learning things, I’ve had interesting conversations on Twitter that have developed into projects. As an academic physician, I’ve found the use of social media has been invaluable. Engaging in social media gives physicians a worldwide community of colleagues who can help curate the vast and ever-growing amount of information available today.”