

Dr N K Singh

National EC Member, RSSDI

Founder/ Editor: CME INDIA



# Impact of Digital CME Through WhatsApp on Knowledge Dissemination Among RSSDI Peers

# Agenda



**CME INDIA Study Showcases WhatsApp as a Game-Changer for Continuing Medical Education**

Introduction

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Research In Focus

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Engaging the RSSDI PEERS

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Future Direction for similar Studies

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Conclusion

RESEARCH

Open Access

# Leveraging the use of a social media app as a collaborative medical information and knowledge sharing tool—insights from experiential use and survey of a CME WhatsApp community

Nagendra Kumar Singh<sup>1\*</sup>, Akashkumar N Singh<sup>2</sup>, Bijay Patni<sup>3</sup>, Ajoy Tewari<sup>4</sup> and Sanjeev Phatak<sup>5</sup>

5-year Journal Impact Factor: 3.4

- CABI
- CAS
- Cinahl
- Citebase
- Current contents
- DOAJ
- Embase
- EmCare
- Global Health
- MEDLINE
- OAlster
- PubMed
- PubMed Central
- Science Citation Index Expanded
- SCImago
- Scopus
- Social Sciences Citation Index
- SOCOLAR
- Zetoc



The proliferation of mobile technology, particularly the widespread adoption of smartphones, has had a profound impact

On how professionals' access and share

Information through social media (SM) as “a collective term for the different interactive platforms, web-sites and applications intended for digital networking, that allow individuals and organizations to create and share user-generated content digitally.”

WhatsApp groups have emerged as focused communication hubs for professionals, including those in the medical field.

**These platforms offer a democratic space for discussing cases, sharing knowledge, seeking real-time peer expertise, and collaborating on best practices.**

**However, the use of WhatsApp for professional purposes among large groups has its limitations.**

**The high volume of messages and the potential for false narratives can create noise, causing important information to get lost amidst the medium.**

## Q in Focus

Is continuing medical education a formal requirement and one of the **key drivers of RSSDI Member engagement with peer community** and other allied groups in various in-person and virtual modes and essential in keeping up with the rapidly expanding field of medicinal research and treatment evolution?

**The ability and access to sift through focused good quality content, attend medical conferences/webinars/ workshops/podcasts live case discussions is valuable, but may not always be feasible to all physicians, particularly those in remote areas or in very busy practices**

While a lot of content is now delivered and accessible online, going through several different websites or publications requires a disciplined daily engagement, which may not be in everyone's realm of ability

**If the community were to be able to follow a well- defined protocol or rules of the group and therefore allow it to function as a live interactive platform and not restricted as a broadcast group or a one-way communication platform, its use as a CME tool could be better leveraged and over a period**

**Such platforms could integrate themselves as formal mechanism of verified information and expertise exchange**

**We present here the experiences of one such professional community using WhatsApp as a CME tool**

**The results of a cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey that was undertaken to assess its impact and effectiveness amongst the 3500 physicians.**

*The WhatsApp CME INDIA, a cluster of **12 WA***

*A rapidly growing community currently of **9000** registered medical professionals largely from internal medicine and allied branches across the world, majority from India (including rural areas), and Indian origin NRI medical professionals.*

**The primary engagement of this cluster of groups is to share and deliberate on interesting cases, offer, and seek real time expert opinion, discuss publications, medical guidelines or topics in current focus**

- **To keep it interesting and engaging, medical quiz, history in medicine and similar engaging topics constitute part of daily updates.**
- **The cluster is constantly focused only on the key objective of being collective experiential knowledge sharing professional community.**
- **The administrator ensures that the group engages strictly on topics or cases related to internal medicine and all distracting communication is discouraged**

# The Study

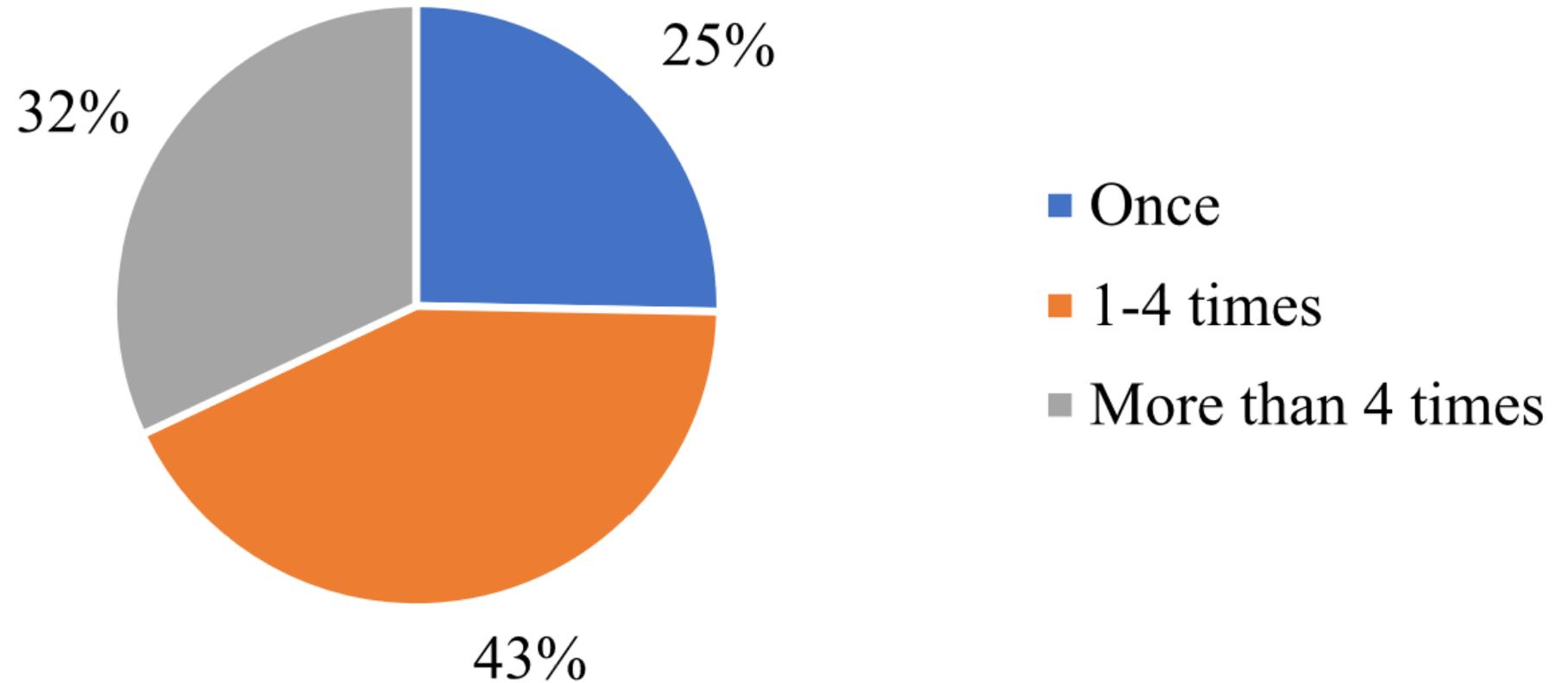
- **This prospective observational survey questionnaire was developed to quantitatively assess the utility and value of this knowledge sharing and learning platform for the group members.**
- **It aimed to examine attitudes towards engagement in group interactions by the participants, the determinants, or drivers of WhatsApp CME India group usage among healthcare professionals.**

Through a comprehensive assessment, the survey sought to understand its impact on enhancing knowledge, its reach, engagement levels, and the benefits and challenges faced by its members.

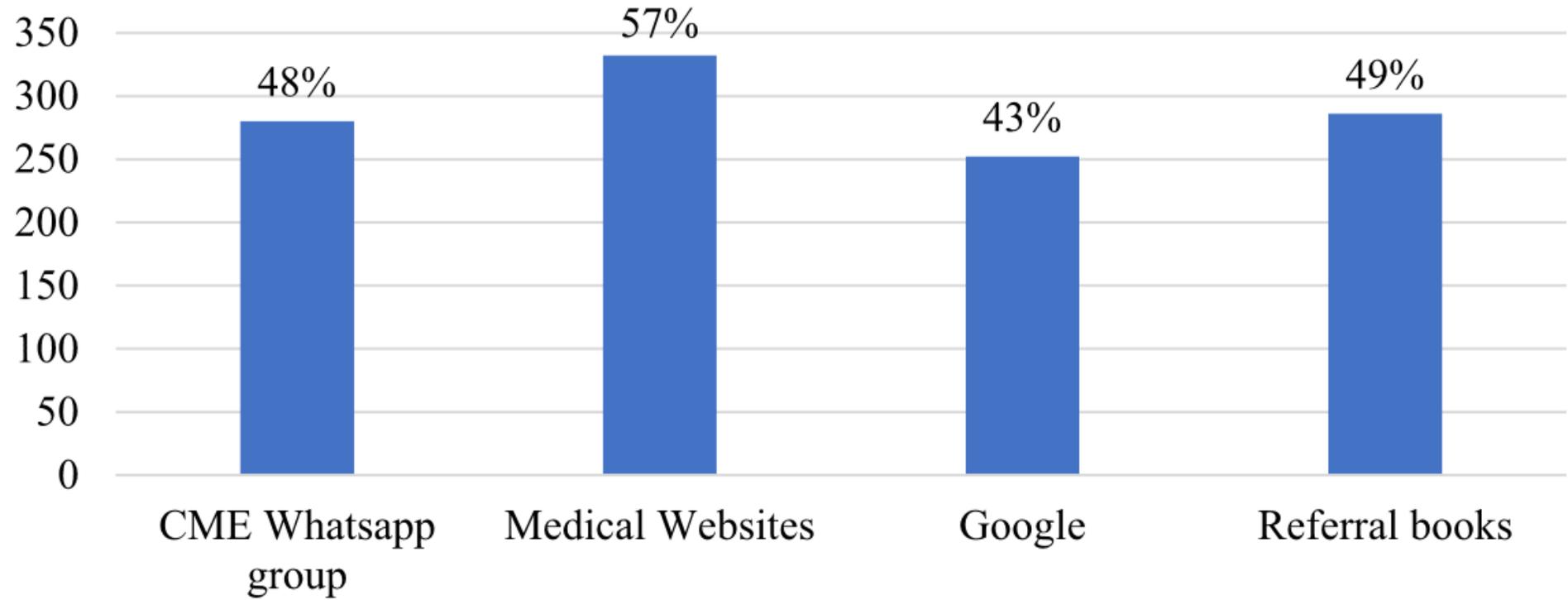
- The questionnaire for the survey was created using Google Form (Google LLC, Mountain View, CA, USA) and shared amongst the WhatsApp CME India groups between May and June 2023.
- The survey instrument was developed by the authors, and vetted by an expert committee, which included two specialists, a statistician, and the authors of the current study.
- The questionnaire sought to **understand the impact of the group** and the member engagement activities **qualitatively and quantitatively as a learning and teaching tool.**
- **The questions were related to the quantum of daily engagement, the value of the group in the hierarchy of available learning options, the comparative utility of the various offerings in the groups and staying true to its objective in being a platform aiding CME.**

# Result

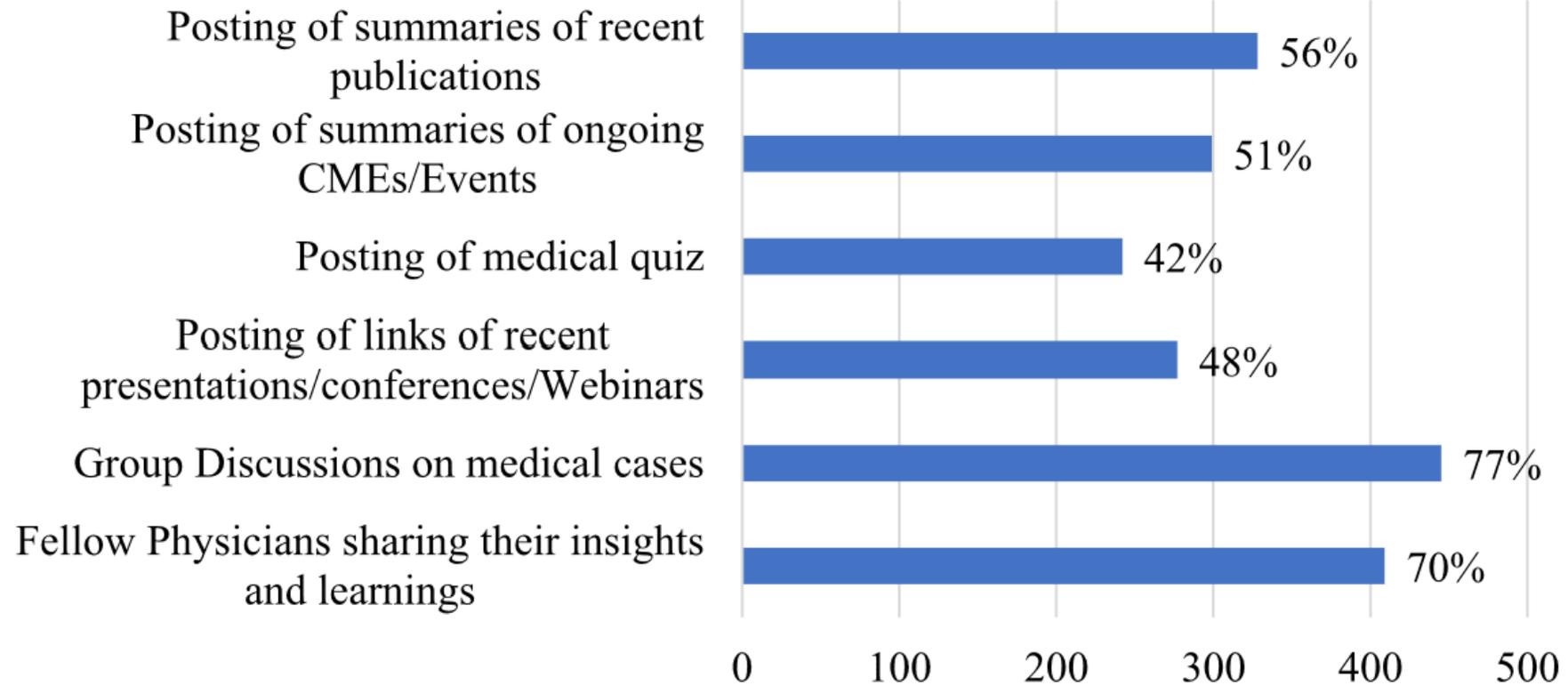
Singh et al. BMC Medical Education (2024) 24:960



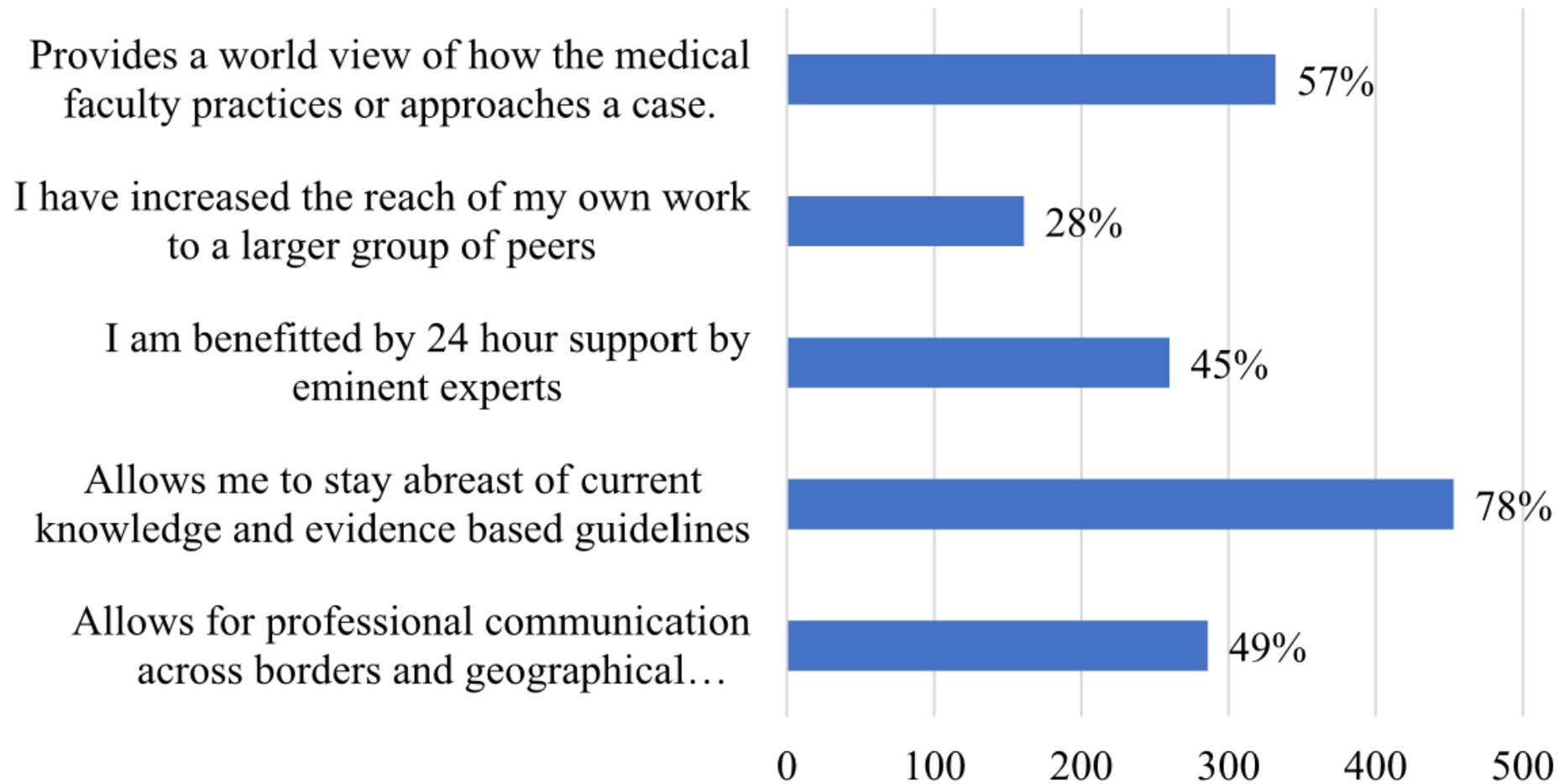
**Fig. 1** Percentage and Frequency of people relying on WhatsApp CME India group in a day to access CME content



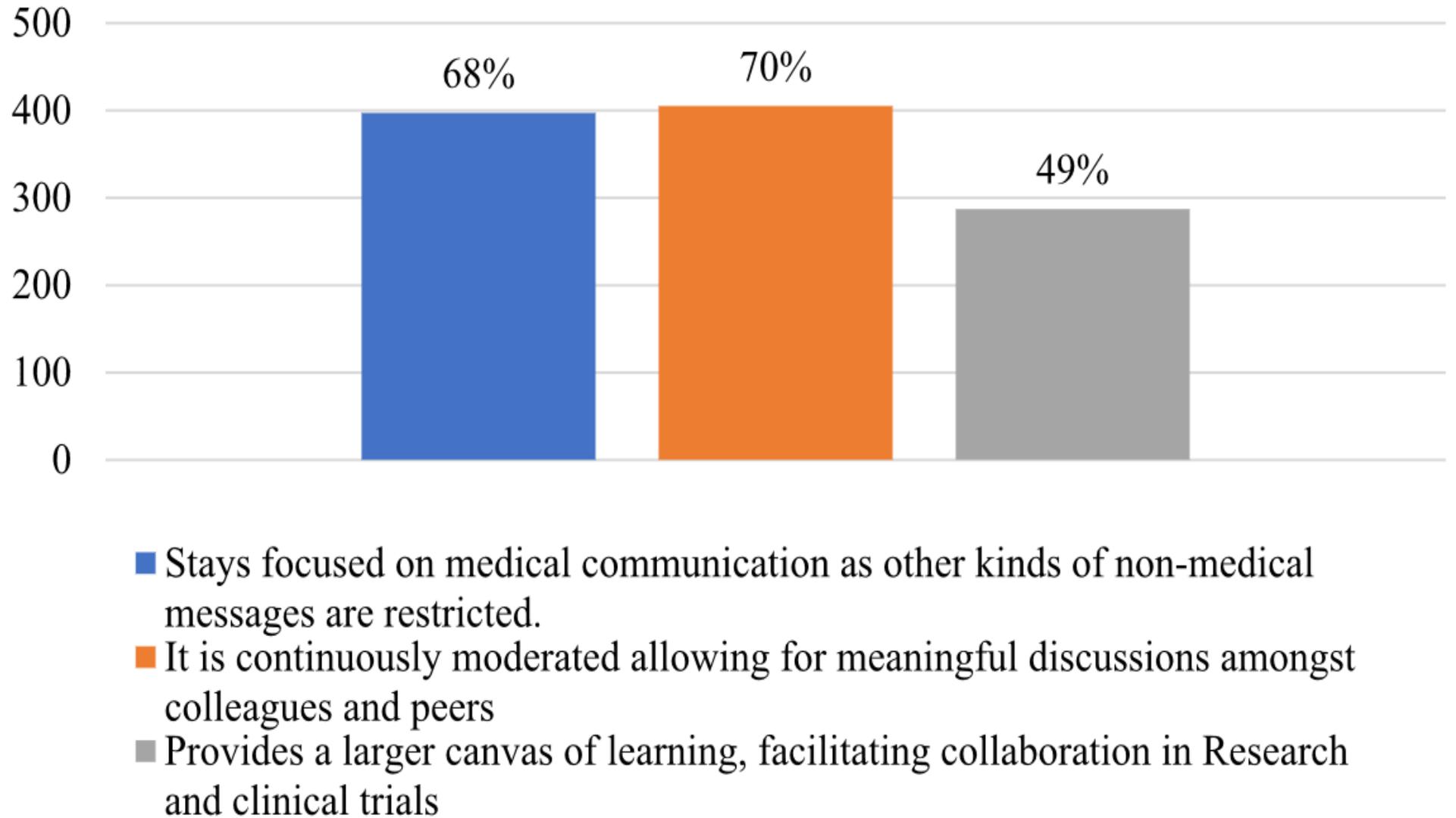
**Fig. 2** Valuable Resources Accessed for Information



**Fig. 3** Most Attractive Attributes of the WhatsApp CME India Group



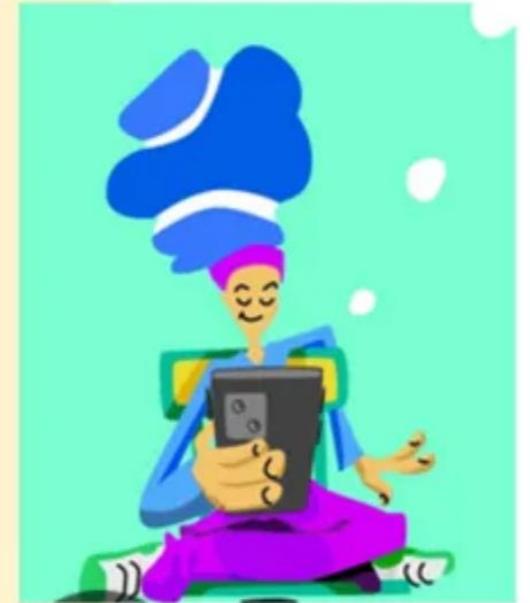
**Fig. 4** Useful Objectives of the WhatsApp CME India Group

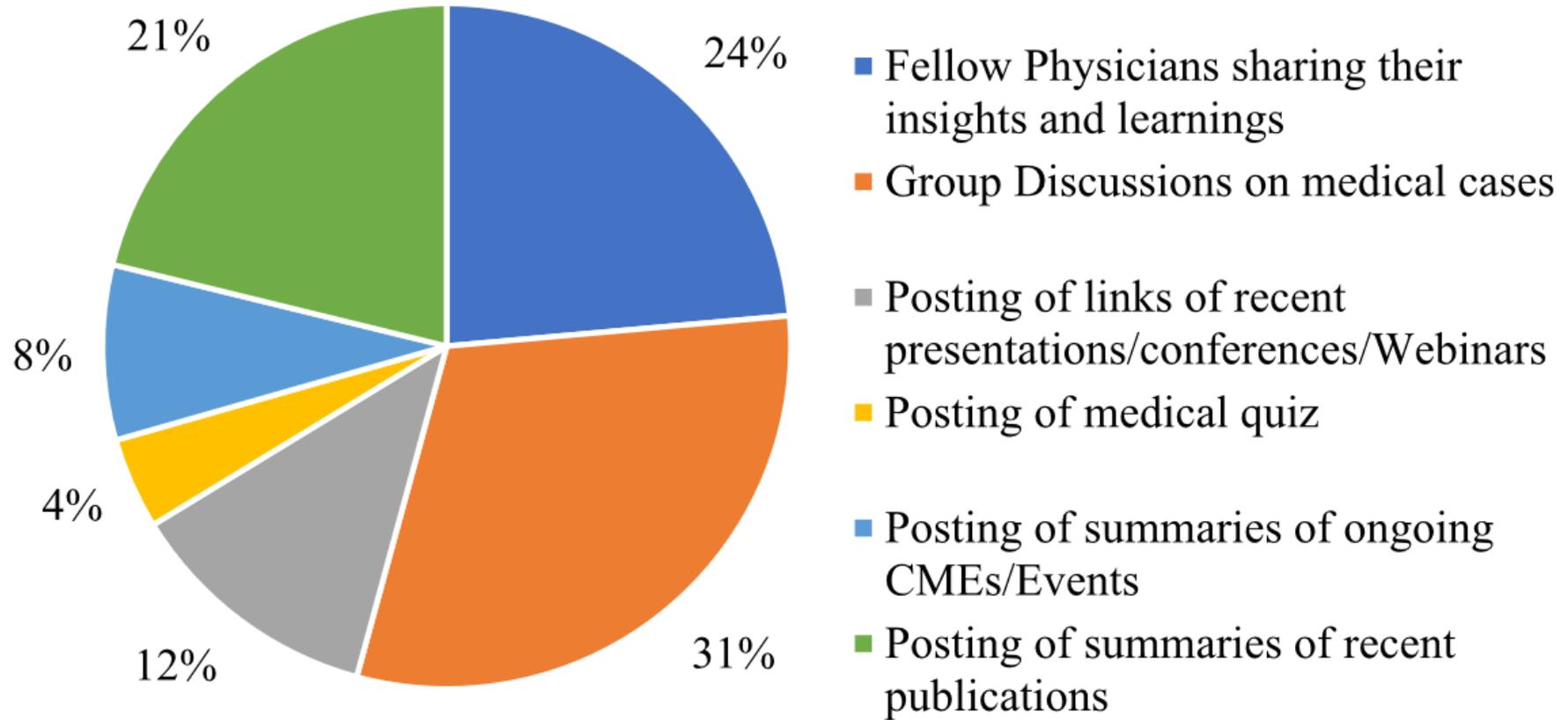


**Fig. 5** Most Attractive quality of the WhatsApp CME India Group Functioning

Respondents unanimously agreed that the group is a powerful tool for medical education, providing access to evolving knowledge (78%), a global view of medical practices (57%), and professional communication across regions.

Key features appreciated included focused medical discussions, continuous moderation (70%), and collaborative opportunities for research and clinical trials (49%).





**Fig. 6** Activities of Most Academic value in the WhatsApp CME India Group

WhatsApp CME India group was a supplement to physical conferences and not a replacement



A large majority of respondents (94%) felt that while the WhatsApp CME India group was a supplement to physical conferences and not a replacement, the post-conference/webinar summaries (81%) shared on the group were well appreciated

WhatsApp



**CME INDIA**

✓ You: Answer B



**CME INDIA 2**

✓ You: Answer B



**CME INDIA 1**

✓ You: Answer B



**CME INDIA 3**

✓ You: Answer B



**CME INDIA 4**

✓ You: Answer B



**CME INDIA 5**

✓ You: Answer B

## Limitations of the study

- **Limited group size,**
- **Difficulty in tracking of responses across the groups**
- **Data retrieving and archiving, delivering structured content, privacy, and ethics considerations**
- **Potential to be overused or misused with information(overload or false narratives) etc. that may cause distractions,**
- **Unstructured discussions**
- **The potential for misinformation, are inherent challenges**

- Among 3500 members, 16.6% returned the survey, a number lower than the average rate of survey responses is however reflective of how any of these group's function where a small minority of members are usually its most active participants.
- This insight into the reality of most social media groups, wherein most participants remain inactive, and social communication and therefore the flavour of the knowledge sharing is driven by the active members

## Considering Limitations of any Study is very Important

- For administrators and educators, these limitations can pose significant challenges that they need to overcome to analyse the study outcomes.
- The results from this study showed that the administrators and educators can overcome these limitations and efficiently use WhatsApp which was primarily built as a social media messaging platform as an interactive learning tool with the use of right protocol and processes.

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# What RSSDI PEERS CAN INTRAPOLATE FROM THIS STUDY

**The appeal and value addition as a modality for CME is reflected in the sustained growth of the WhatsApp CME India group**

**The results of the survey provide a valuable insight into potential of using a social media messaging platform for CME activities. The user interface, existing user experience and ease of use of the platform when coupled with adherence to group guidelines and effective moderation have the potential for it be used a powerful educational too**

**These activities seamlessly integrated with traditional information resources, such as medical websites, referral books, and search engines like Google, to form a comprehensive and crucial CME modality.**

**This finding demonstrates that medical professionals are receptive to using blended learning methods, combining both digital and traditional resources to access information and enhance their knowledge**

The high prevalence rate of case discussions (77%) and updates from fellow colleagues' (70%) sheds light on the collaborative learning culture which is uniquely possible only in a democratic real time platform such as WhatsApp

*The successful use of this medium requires a trifecta of an easy-to-use digital platform, development and adherence to group guidelines and most importantly active administrators and moderators continuously moderating and helming the group which is a mammoth task.*

# RSSDI RESEARCH

## What our Peers can do?

Future Direction for similar Studies

- **Future studies** on E-learning activities in CME should aim to create the learning environment within the health system to realize the full potentials of E-learning.
- **Future research** should also further explore the effect of E-learning on physician's behavioural practice, like prescribing behaviour

# Study Shows Online Continuing Medical Education Highly Effective in Adoption of Evidenced Based Medicine

Physicians who participated in varied formats of selected Internet CME activities were more likely, following participation, to make evidence-based clinical choices in response to case vignettes than non-participants.

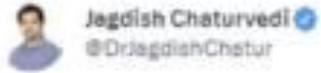
**These data support the assertion that Internet CME activities are effective and offer a searchable, credible, available on-demand, high-impact source of CME for physicians**

**Despite a good deal of lip service from faculty during residency years about the importance of “lifelong learning,” these same students and residents receive virtually no meaningful guidance on keeping up-to-date after they finish medical school and residency.**

**Practitioners are essentially on their own issues as they face the serious challenge of keeping their knowledge, skills, and performance up-to-date, and up to consistently high standards, in the midst of an increasingly hectic professional life.**

# Adverse Effects ?





Jagdish Chaturvedi  
@DrJagdishChatur

ONLY ONE PERSON in the audience for my scientific talk at an international medical conference!!

Can anyone take a wild guess why that one person attended?

The answer will make you "speechless" 😊

#EveryMedicalConferenceEver  
#medicalresearch  
#scientificresearch  
#Conferences



11:26



4

Can you guess the answer 11:27

## Some Chats from RSSDI case Discussion Gr

[17/03, 11:44] Dr Ramkumar Guntur: Zoom is convenient we can talk to Noone 😊 it taught us the habit of talking even no one is visible .It's like laughter yoga laughing to ourselves Once a Pharma friend slept off while changing slides called him to wake him

😊 [17/03, 16:31] Dr prabhat Agarwal Agra: Sir I have witnessed in one Gyne conference. My wife was speaker n me n my kids were audience. National ACOG [17/03, 16:32] Dr Ramkumar Guntur: Good idea I will take my family for my speech 😊

[17/03, 16:35] Dr manohar Bengaluru: That's the message to all of us that we are overdoing this Conference business ...

# The medical conference is dead, long live the medical conference

Which medical conferences?

Medical societies  
Patient organizations  
Pharmas  
Medical marketing orgs



What doctors say about virtual events

PROS

- Not being away from home
- Eliminates travel
- Significantly reduced costs
- Attend in pyjamas
- Global access
- Educational experience as good as or better than physical

CONS

- Unable to physically network
- No serendipitous collaboration opportunities
- Time-zone differences
- Occasional technical glitches

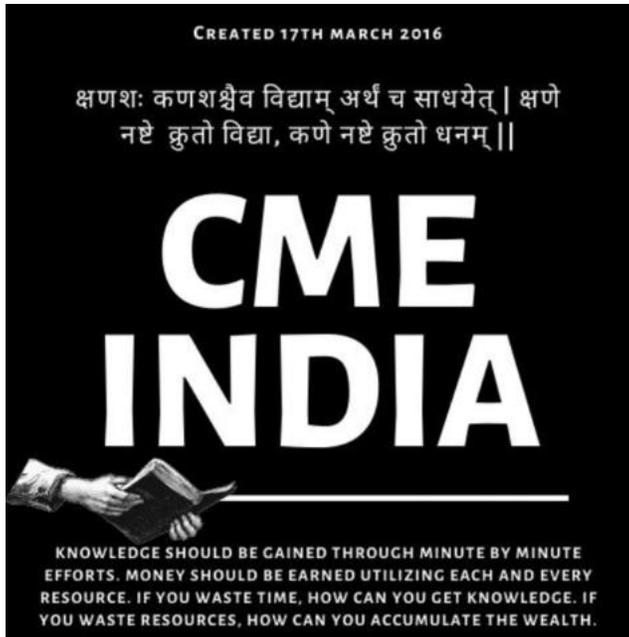
'Going virtual, compared to in-person, represented a huge financial hit'

**It must be emphasized that while formal academic sessions in conferences and seminars are useful, one cannot underscore enough the importance of informal conversations.**

**Doctors tend to change their practice through professional exchanges or dialogues with their colleagues rather than as a consequence of attending formal educational sessions.**

**Educational inputs need to be continuous and aimed at daily practice, rather than intermittent and targeted.**

**Informal opportunities to discuss and share experiences such as peer reviews, audit meetings and case discussions are equally useful**

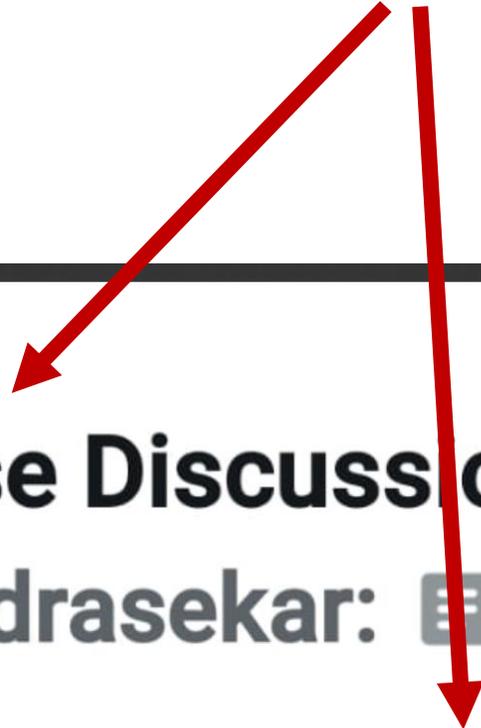


WhatsApp CME  
Since 2016

24 7 CME Possible

-  **CME INDIA Broadcast** 07:32  
✓ HRCT Thorax in COVID ER...
-  **CME INDIA 1** 07:32  
✓ HRCT Thorax in COVID ER...
-  **CME INDIA 2** 07:32  
✓ HRCT Thorax in COVID... 🔊
-  **CME INDIA 3** 07:32  
✓ HRCT Thorax in COVID... 🔊
-  **CME INDIA 4** 07:32  
✓ HRCT Thorax in COVID ER...
-  **CME INDIA** 07:32  
✓ HRCT Thorax in COVID... 🔊

# RSSDI CME



## Chats



**RSSDI Case Discussions**

21:18

Dr S Chandrasekar:  Sci Agenda Retreat 23... 



**RSSDI CASE DISCUSSION 1**

09:54

Mohan:  100-year old professor shares com...

## Final Points

**Overall, continued medical education is a powerful tool that helps healthcare professionals stay up-to-date with the latest advances in their fields, enhance their professional skills, and improve the quality of care they provide to their patients.**

**By investing in CME, healthcare professionals can improve patient outcomes, advance their careers, and contribute to the overall improvement of healthcare**

**Medical Science is dynamic and it is essential for the doctor to become acquainted with the advances in medicine. This is in essence the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).**

**CME Power lies in its unique capabilities to deal with challenges of tremendous advances, updation and application to clinical practice by motivation.**

**WhatsApp CME seems to play an important role in Future CMEs.**

**Hybrid CME – New Avatar**

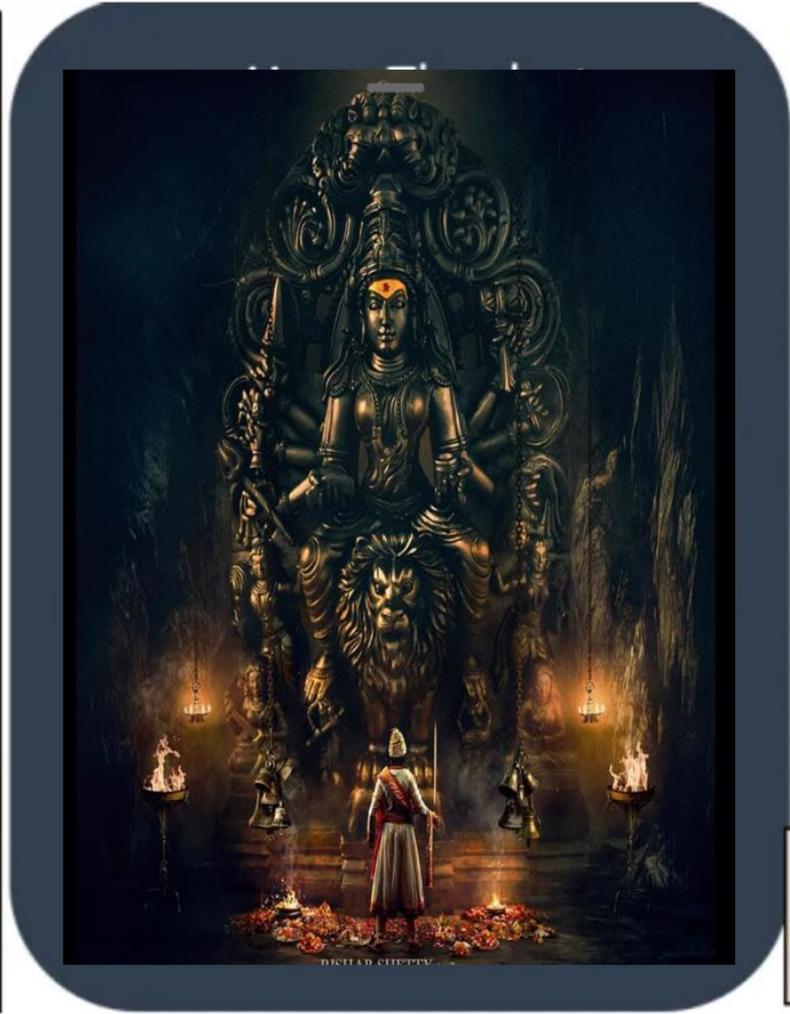
## Conclusions

- **The sustainability and growth of this WhatsApp CME India group highlights the potential and opportunity for using social media for professional knowledge sharing in an integrative and interactive manner.**
- **Survey results underscore its role in peer-based learning, aided by user-friendly features.**
- **Challenges like information overload, propensity to digress require careful moderation which is time and effort intensive.**
- **Understanding WhatsApp's limitations and seeking member input for improvement are essential for maximizing its educational potential.**
- **Overall, while promising, continued research and refinement are needed to enhance its effectiveness in professional Education**
- **RSSDI membership now crosses 12000. WhatsApp CME through RSSDI case discussion groups has immense potential to keep members engaged and updated ,but lots of policy changes need to be made**
- **At Present only 1200 members have been added in the scientific groups of RSSDI with lots of noise and unstructured inputs frequently coming.**

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क्षणशः कणशश्चैव विद्याम् अर्थं च साधयेत् | क्षणे  
नष्टे कुतो विद्या, कणे नष्टे कुतो धनम् ||

# CME INDIA



**Dr. Anupama Ramkumar, M.D  
(Medicine), Principal Consultant &  
CEO , Arkus Research, Ahmedabad**

Thanks

