



THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF POSTS IN ELECTRONIC MAILING GROUP CALLED 'TURK-SPINE'

“TURK-OMURGA” ELEKTRONİK YAZIŞMA GRUBUNDAKİ İLETİLERİN İÇERİK ANALİZİ

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SUMMARY:

Objective: The purpose of this study is to define the content of e-mail messages from the group of Turk-spine between 2001 and 2015.

Methods: E-mail messages received from Turk- Spine group were analyzed between 2001 and 2015, documented by categorizing to 6 groups.

Conclusion: 4260 messages have been sent to the group. The number of messages sent in 2001 was 70, this number reached to 1179 in 2013. The main issues in received messages were noted as congress, symposium, meeting announcements (31.7%) and greetings, condolences and social messages (25.3%). Cases and scientific discussions constitute 14.5% and 4.4% of messages, respectively.

Inference: This study reveals the importance of communication of surgeons interested in spine by e-mail. Although there is a minority of scientific topics and messages, e-mail group continues to grow day by day and its importance is increasing.

Keywords: Spine surgery, communication group, scientific publication

Level of Evidence: Retrospective study, Level III

ÖZET:

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı, 2001-2015 yılları arasında turk-omurga elektronik posta grubuna gelen iletilerin içeriklerini tanımlamaktır.

Yöntem: 2001-2015 arasında Türk-Omurga mail grubuna gelen iletiler analiz edildi, 6 gruba kategorize edilerek belgelendi.

Sonuç: Gruba toplam 4260 ileti gönderilmiştir.2001 yılında gönderilen ileti sayısı 70 iken, 2013 yılında bu rakam 1179'a ulaşmıştır. Gelen iletilerdeki ana konular kongre, sempozyum, toplantı duyuruları (% 31,7) ve tebrik, taziye, sosyal mesajlar (% 25,3) olarak kaydedilmiştir. Vaka ve bilimsel tartışmalar ise sırasıyla iletilerin % 14,5 ve % 4,4 'ünü oluşturmaktadır.

Çıkarım: Çalışma, elektronik posta grubunun, omurgayla ilgilenen cerrahların iletişimindeki önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Bilimsel konu içerikli iletilerin azınlık oluşturmasına rağmen, elektronik posta grubu her geçen gün gelişmeye devam ettiği ve öneminin arttığı görüldü.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Omurga cerrahisi, yazışma grupları, bilimsel yayın

Kanıt Düzeyi: Retrospektif çalışma, Düzey III

INTRODUCTION

Data communication has a very important role in the development of medicine undoubtedly. Despite conferences, courses and special publications undertake this task for data communication, e-mail groups provide this task to achieve much cheaper and quicker in academic environment. Electronic mailing lists are discussion groups that members exchange opinions mostly on one topic via e-mail^{4,6,9}. Along with the rapid evolution and the spread of social media, the popularity of e-mail groups is inevitable. Health-related topics researched on the Internet constitute 4% of all the issues in the whole world¹. Turk- spine mail group, founded in 2001, is a mail-group that orthopedics, traumatologists, neurosurgery specialists dealing with spine surgery communicate to each other and speak Turkish⁵. The determination of how the group is used will help us about how effective we use in the future. In this study, numerically and contextually comparison was aimed to describe for e-mails received from Turk-spine group between 2001 and 2015.

METHODS

All messages received from Turk-spine group were evaluated between 2001 and 2015. 4260 received messages were divided into 6 categories. Categories were divided as i) announcements, ii) case discussions, iii) academic discussions, iv) professional discussions, v) social messages, greetings and condolences.

Classes that are not categorized into above parts were evaluated as vi) other and unclassified messages. The categorization of messages was done by two distinct orthopedists and checked. The number messages sent, the number of new members joined each year and the total number of members were reached on the page of 'turk-spine' mail group.

Variables varying over time were given as a percentage. Classified variables were presented as graphs. Statistical analysis was not included in this study.

RESULTS

Group founded in May 2001 has 47 members by the end of 2001 while the number of members was 344 by the end of 2015. While the average annual number of new members is 28.6, the most increased number of new participants was 115 in 2013 (Figure 1). Total number of messages sent to group was 4260; the annual average of messages was 284. While the average daily number of messages was 0.3 in 2001, this ratio was 1.3 in 2015. The most frequent sent messages in 2013 increase the level of 3.23 messages / day (Figure-2). While the average daily number of messages was 0.3 in 2001, this ratio was 1.3 in 2015. The most frequent sent messages in 2013 increase the level of 3.23 messages / day (Figure-2). While announcements constitute the largest portion of messages (1351-31.7%), academic discussions and case discussions were 795 - 18.9% (Table-1).

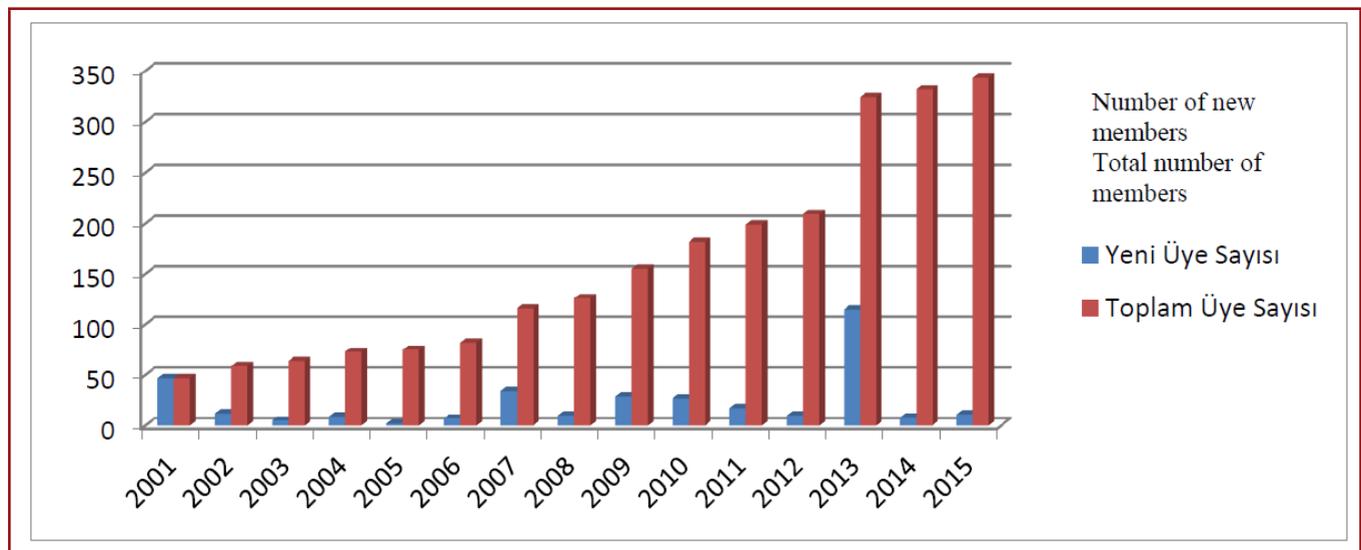


Figure-1. The number of members by year

The number of Messages

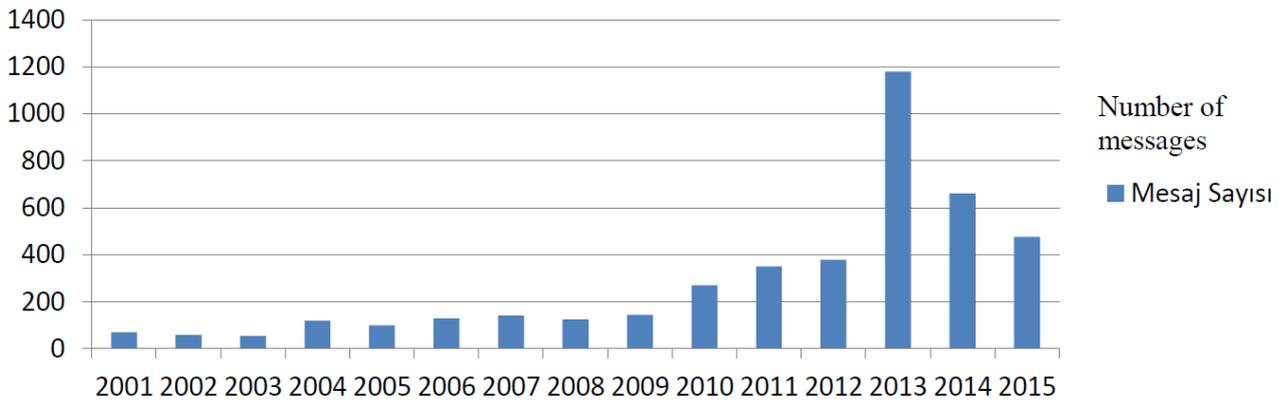


Figure-2. Number of messages by year

Table-1. The number of messages by category, 2001-2015 (n=4260).

Categories	n	%
➤ Announcements	1351	31,7
➤ Case Discussions	618	14,5
➤ Academic Discussions	177	4,4
➤ Occupational Discussions	396	9,2
➤ Social Messages, greetings and condolences	1080	25,3
➤ Other and unclassified ones	638	14,9
➤ Total	4260	100

DISCUSSION

As well as Internet and social media is the most common communication tool in the last three decades, they come to forefront by using for the purpose of access to information and acquiring the knowledge of professionals in the business. Personal blog pages took the place of sites that healthcare professional used to get true and accurate information especially at the beginning of 1990³. In addition to healthcare professionals, patients and their relatives benefited from various websites to get the proper health knowledge^{2,7}. Then, LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter follow, and these formations accelerate the evolution of social media by reaching out to a large audience^{3,11}. E-mail groups also accelerated to reach information in parallel with this evolution, contributed to create an environment for experts to share and discuss among each other. In 2001, Orthopedics and Traumatology specialists, who speak Turkish and interested in spine diseases, founded e-mail group called 'Turk-spine group'

in order to communicate between brain and neurosurgeons, create a discussion environment.

In this study, we aimed to evaluate the activity of 'Turk-spine group' during 15 years. Study showed that the number of posts compared to previous years increased significantly. Undoubtedly, the annual increase in the number of members has a major role for the increase in the annual rate of messages between the years 2001-2015. The total number of members has been 343 by year 2015. Although the average annual number of new members is 22.8, the maximum number of new members for a year is 115 in 2013. Besides the increase in the number of members, increased activities based on spine related conventions, conferences etc. will also explain the increase in the number of posts over the years. The average of 0.77 messages sent per day during 15 years. This rate has reached its highest value in 2013 (3.23 messages/ day). The number or annual messages under 200 during 9 year, rise over 400 for the last 3 years.

When the largest part of messages, which is composed of announcements (31.7%) and social messages (25.3%), are considered, it is understood that the mail group also used as a serious social network. So that members used this e-mail group to share their joys, sorrows and state their condolences and congratulations. Besides, an interesting finding in this study is that discussion of cases (14.5%) and academic discussions (4.4%) were significantly lower. In the study made by McLauchlan and colleagues in 1999, 50% of messages sent during 4 months in e-mail group are related with case discussions and general orthopedics and traumatology¹¹. Morgen and his colleagues examined that 54% of messages sent to the "Norway occupational health" group were found to be related with directly occupational diseases between the years of 1997-2006¹⁰. In the detailed analysis of the messages, which is conducted by Kose and colleagues in "Turk-Orthopod" group, 10.8% of messages were related with academic discussions and case discussions. The data found in our study is closer to the results of study conducted by Kose and colleagues and academic discussions were found to be lower than that of other studies.

We thought that the reason of low rate of academic discussions and case discussions resulted from lack of habit of asking questions rather than the quality of the content of the questions. We believe that experienced physicians should encourage less experienced physicians in order to increase academic discussions. While experienced physicians offer their experience, they can provide younger colleagues to participate more to the discussions.

In our study, there are limited features. Messages were classified by 2 orthopedists. As this classification may be affected in terms of the subjective point of view, we tried to solve this by evaluating all messages separately. We did not make a detailed analysis of the content of the messages and demonstrated more quantitative values. There is a need for different investigations about whether it is useful or not by making more detailed analysis in content.

'Turk-spine group' is an active group, which is used by Turkish speaking physicians interested in spine for 15 years. It is a social media community where scientific discussions made; congress, courses and workshops announced; greetings and condolences sent by members each other. In order to increase the rate of scientific discussions, members must be sensitive about unnecessary messages.

With the evaluation of social media and emergence of sites like VuMedi, which have more satisfying video scientifically, and effective forms of expression with slides, mail groups could lose its importance⁸. In the future, it is difficult to predict

which social media elements will remain dominant and strong. This success depends on factors such as good design and rich content³. So maybe we can make the group more permanent.

As a result, although scientific topics and messages have a minority in 'Turk-spine' mail group, it was observed that e-mail group has continued to improve with each day and increased its importance.

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