An evaluation of the utility and impact of PubMed Commons during the pilot phase

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Background and aims of our research

What is PubMed Commons?
Tool enabling researchers to share opinions and information about publications indexed on PubMed
Only authors on PubMed-indexed articles are eligible to become members and make subsequent comments
Open pilot phase began in October 2013

Aim of research
As the monitoring of this online forum is likely to become increasingly important from a publication planning perspective, we evaluated how PubMed Commons has been used so far and the tone and impact of the comments that have been made

Results overview

- 1955 comments on 1615 articles in 771 journals
- 1.22 (mean 1.2) comments per article
- Number of comments added per month has fluctuated, with no evidence of an increasing trend
- 55% of comments made on articles that had been published before the introduction of PubMed Commons
- Individuals made between 1 and 109 comments

- 16.9% of first comments made by an author of the article
- Significant positive association between journal IF and total number of comments
- 68% of comments on clinical/pharmacological articles (868 comments on 733 articles) were positive or neutral in tone
- Journal commenting facility used more than PubMed Commons
- Relatively low activity about PubMed Commons on Twitter

Conclusions

- Uptake of PubMed Commons has been relatively low
- The platform has not been used to overly criticize publications and has the potential to positively impact on the integrity of publications
- Allowing a wider audience to comment could increase its utility

For more information on methodology and results please download the full poster