

# Use of social media in the large hospital groups in the County of West Götaland

## Including a case study from Angered's Local Hospital.

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## Background

Social media is an important communicative and interactive tool, which gives a great opportunity for health care providers to partner with the public. Healthcare related social media use by public health authorities, healthcare organisations and hospitals in Sweden has evolved a lot over the past few years. However, not much is known about the personnel's awareness of official channels on social media.

Angered's Local Hospital is a new modern hospital, opened in the summer of 2015 providing healthcare and health-promoting services to its' diverse and multicultural local community in North-West Gothenburg (region Nordost).

## Aim

The aim of this research was to establish the current social media usage within the large hospital groups in the County of West Götaland and to establish the current level of awareness by hospital staff of their hospitals' official social media channels

A case study of Angered's Local Hospital is used as an example of a hospital that has invested in social media in order to fulfil its role in health promotion.

## Results

The study revealed that all large hospital groups in the County of West Götaland use social media and have several social media channels with different functions. Only two of the 18 hospitals did not have any official account on SM. All the large hospital groups in the region use social media regularly in order to: 1) inform the public, 2) promote the hospital, 3) recruit staff. Facebook was the leading form of SM used among the hospitals in VGR. On average hospitals produce 10-12 posts each month, the proportion of directly health-related posts (excluding Angered) is between 1.38%-3.20%.

Communications officers reported that they were planning to continue and develop the hospitals' work with social media in the future.

Awareness of hospital social media among the personnel is high, especially about Facebook, 98% to 100% of all respondents stated they were aware of official Facebook. Moreover the majority (93,5%) of respondents reported visiting the official Facebook account at least once. Awareness about other hospitals' SM – channels was lower.

### Angered hospital case study

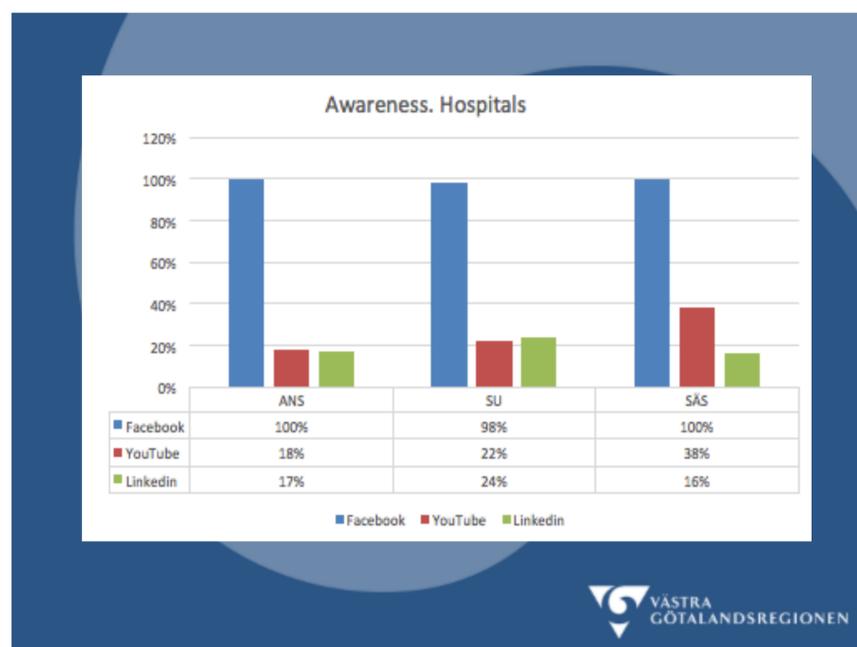
The policy towards SM at Angered is based on a population needs survey conducted before the new hospital was opened. The main focus in ANS was also on Facebook. Angered posted on average 12 posts per month during the study. Different departments are encouraged to post on Facebook. The proportion of directly health-related posts was 19,55%. Social media interactions were mainly focused on health-related information among all the target groups..

## Conclusion

Hospitals are eager to engage with their target groups and aware of the possible benefits of interaction in terms of health promotion. However, the main focus is on information presented to the public and not interaction. Health promotion is also a much smaller proportion of the social media output than might be expected given a previous study which found that nationally 62% of posts by local health authorities were health-related (Appelstrand 2014). Opportunities for interaction are limited to the hospitals working hours and personnel resources. Given that social media is designed for interaction this would seem to indicate that SM is not being used to its fullest potential.

The Angered's Local Hospital has invested in social media in order to fulfil its role in a diverse population with specific health needs. A service designed on a survey of needs may be the reason for greater proportion of health-related posts. It's still early to evaluate the results but ANS's social media activity is currently as large as larger hospital groups' in the region in terms of interactions and followers.

**The use of social media within healthcare in the County of West Götaland is has yet to take full advantage of the interactive possibilities.**



## Method

This study has used a mixed methods approach involving:

- a literature search of issues related to social media usage in health-care contexts
- an internet survey of ANS, NU, SÅS, SKAS and SU hospitals' official social media channels,
- recorded and transcribed personal interviews with the hospital communications officers employed by ANS, NU, SÅS, SKAS and SU hospitals
- an on-line survey of personnel at ANS, SU and SÅS hospitals.

