

Background

- The use of social media in healthcare is being widely advocated and is often associated with the emergence of the 'e-patient', a term describing individuals who are equipped, enabled, engaged and empowered to self-manage their health.¹⁻⁴
- While much of the current literature focuses on how healthcare organizations or clinicians use this new technology, there is little evidence to describe patients' use of social media and its implications for self-management from patients' perspectives.⁵

Purpose

- This qualitative study examines how arthritis patients with multi-morbidity describe their use of social media, and explores the emerging implications for self-management.

Methods

- A secondary analysis of data collected in larger study titled 'Ehealth Ethics & Multi-Morbidity'.⁶
- Eligible participants:
 - had self-reported diagnosis of osteoarthritis (OA) and/or any type of inflammatory arthritis (IA), plus at least one other chronic condition;
 - lived in British Columbia;
 - were English-speaking
- Participants were recruited via online ads, notices in clinics of rheumatologists and rehabilitation professionals, and word of mouth.
- In-depth interview (60-90 mins) with phone follow-up; transcribed verbatim.



- A constant comparison analysis guided by ethnographic traditions applied to the data; member checking embedded in the process and peer-checking added rigour to analysis.

Findings

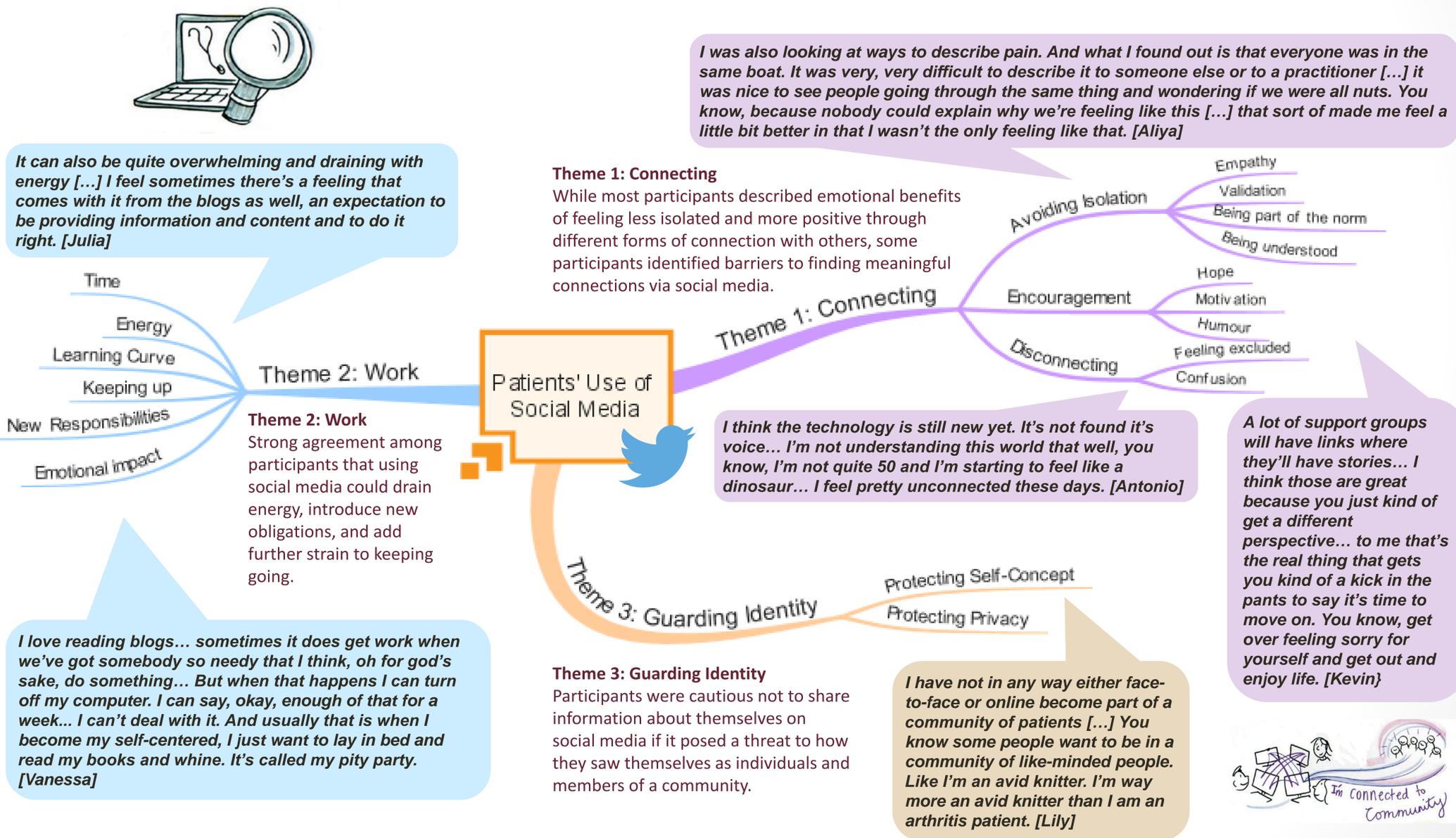
Sample Characteristics (n=17)

Female	14 (82%)
Age Range (median)	23-67 yrs (55 yrs)
Caucasian	15 (88%)
Urban	15 (88%)
Level of Education	
- Below Bachelor Degree	11 (65%)
- Bachelor Degree or higher	6 (35%)
Self-reported diagnosis of OA; of IA;	5 (29%); 12 (71%)

References:

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We focus on 3 main themes:



Conclusion

Findings reveal insights into patient experiences that have implications for health professionals and inform self-management approaches. Recognition of these emerging issues may help reduce potential burdens on patients. Gaining greater understanding of patient experiences of social media could influence an empathetic and holistic view among health professionals in the digital age.

