**Medical Education/Professional Relationships/Social Media**

**CASE 5**

Annie, Andrew, Hannah & Will are third year medical students. They are also very good friends. They are relieved to have made it thru the first two years of 'basic science'. They all scored well on step 1 and began their third year clerkships one week ago.

At the beginning of week two Annie sends an SOS email to her three friends. She has just been assigned to a patient who has multiple medical problems. She is having difficulty sorting thru the patient's history and co morbidities and deciding which 'illness' is the acute reason for the patient's admission. She emails her friends a detailed account of the patient's medical history to ask for their advice about how to manage this patient.

Andrew responds first with a video to all three of himself changing bandages on a patient's ear. He demonstrates his skillful bandaging in part by panning the patient smiling during the bandage change.

Hannah emails that she loves all of 'her’ patients. She complains about her resident who is a nice guy but a terrible teacher. He spends very little time with her and responds to her questions by telling her to look it up. Hannah suggests that the four of them begin an on line study group to discuss their patients' illnesses, and answer each others' questions. She thinks that combining their clinical experiences will exponentially multiply their clinical learning and patient management skills.

Will joins this conversation by continually tweeting about his interactions with various staff, residents on his service and other students on his rotation.

Are these email communications ethical, professional, wise?

Would it make a difference if this information was posted by each student on her/his face book page? What if this information was blogged on the school's private, secure social service network?