Standing up for science on social media: the good, the bad and the ugly

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This talk covers how and why I use social media as a sport and exercise nutrition scientist, what it has done for my work, and what it has cost me. I'll start with the good. A 2018 meta–analysis on protein supplementation and resistance training that I co–authored travelled far beyond the journal: well over a hundred news outlets, thousands of posts on X, Reddit threads, podcasts, and an Altmetric score most papers never get near. Attention and citations aren't the same thing, but they're related, and that reach has opened doors with mainstream media and the public that a paper on its own never would. It's also where I learned to write for people who aren't scientists: find the analogy, then cut what you wrote in half. Then the bad and the ugly. It takes time, a lot of it, and I'll be frank about the logistics: which platforms I use (X, Instagram, Facebook, and more recently the Real Exercise Science podcast and Substack with Martin Gibala), how I decide what's worth posting, how much is planned versus reactive, and when to leave a fight alone. Protein, creatine, supplements and "anabolic windows" draw out a lot of self–appointed experts, and it's hard to impress people with evidence when the competing claim is simpler and louder. Thicken your skin. Some of what comes back is abusive, and the platforms are far more tolerant of it than they claim. I'll close with a caution. A tongue–in–cheek metric, the Kardashian index, compares a scientist's follower count with what their citation record would predict. It's a joke with a point. The platform exists to translate the science; it doesn't replace doing it. If your K–index climbs too high, log off and write the papers. Take–homes for researchers and practitioners in sport and exercise nutrition: social media is a useful and sometimes powerful way to get good science to the people who need it. Learn the platform and use it regularly. Expect that many people won't understand your work, and plenty won't be impressed by it. Rise above the noise rather than adding to it. And protect your time, because nobody else will.