



## Social Media and Health Promotion

Alsuyayfi S\*, Alsulimani N, Aldhergham A, Alahmary A and Alkhateeb A

King Saud University, Saudi Arabia

\*Corresponding author: Sarah Alsuyayfi, King Saud University, Prince Sultan Military Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Tel: 00966554509045; Email: sarahalsuyayfi@gmail.com

### Mini Review

Volume 9 Issue 1

Received Date: December 23, 2024

Published Date: January 31, 2025

DOI: 10.23880/nhij-16000337

### Abstract

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool in health promotion, enabling rapid dissemination of health-related information, fostering community engagement, and driving behavior change. Platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and TikTok facilitate communication between health organizations and the public, ensuring timely updates and education. Social media's integration of multimedia formats enhances information retention, while online communities offer support for individuals with chronic illnesses or mental health challenges. Furthermore, interactive features such as live sessions and influencer partnerships contribute to effective health campaigns. However, challenges like misinformation, privacy concerns, and ethical considerations must be addressed to maximize the benefits of social media in health promotion. By employing evidence-based communication strategies and leveraging analytics, health organizations can optimize outreach efforts and improve public health outcomes. This paper explores the opportunities and risks associated with social media in health promotion, providing insights into best practices for maximizing its effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Health Organizations; Social Media

### Introduction

In this present generation, social media is one of the most significant means of communication and sharing information. Being the practice focused on enhancing health and well-being of persons and communities, health promotion has witnessed the advantages of social media usage. Some examples of such platforms are Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and TikTok through which such health organizations can spread information to the masses at the shortest time possible, interact with the respective communities, and initiate behavioral change. This paper aims at presenting how social media is used in health promotion, practicality of the approach and opportunities and threats together with effective practice.

### Literature Review

One of the most important uses of social media to encourage health promotion is the ability to share information within the shortest time possible. It allows the sending of new important health information and health recommendations together with health education material to a large number of organizations and people instantaneously. For instance, in the course of the Coronavirus disease, social media was used by the WHO and the CDC in disseminating details of the disease, precautions to be taken and vaccination protocols Kudchadkar SR, et al. [1].

Social media also enables integration of various multimedia formats such as information graphics, videos, and



live streaming that can aid in the comprehending and recall of health information. For instance, to share information about the coronavirus, organizations developed animated videos that demonstrate such topics in a layman's approach Yang B, et al. [2]. This multimedia approach not only educates but also compels people to forward it to other people as well, therefore increasing its circle of influence.

### Community Engagement

Social media platforms encourage consumers' engagement since people can group together to share health-related experiences. Online communities, common on Facebook, offer platforms for persons suffering from similar illnesses, where they can discuss about the disease, receive information or offer help Dash A [3]. Such sense of community can prove to be very helpful for patients who suffer from chronic diseases or mental disorders as it helps them to feel that they are not alone in their everyday struggle.

Furthermore, it also has provided a direct access to the public by the use of the social media platforms. Webinars, live interactions on the Instagram and Twitter walls are very effective as they allow the health experts to attend to queries directly and make the processes much more transparent Nusair K, et al. [4]. Interacting with the audiences in this way also informs but also empowers persons to assume control of their health conditions.

### Behavior Change

Social media also plays an important role of enhancing motivation and encouraging people, to change their behavior. This is evident especially in the health segments where organizations, governments and other stakeholder have developed various campaigns that promote healthier lifestyles including quitting smoking, getting physically active, and improving on the kind of foods that one takes Kamalruzzaman MS, et al. [5]. For instance, "MyPlate" that focuses on encouraging proper food diet and consumption engages social media as a way of sharing recipes & other strategies, educational information, success stories that will influence positive changes to people's behaviors towards healthy diet consumption.

Other emerging techniques have also helped in expanding the coverage of the health promotion messages including influencer partnerships. As we have seen, other younger audiences can be well reached by using social media influencers in partnership with health organizations. The promoters can engage the followers with their own health stories and this way the message is made familiar and the followers are inspired to change their habits for the better Petkovic J, et al. [6]. Such an approach has been found to

be highly effective mostly in mental health, nutrition, and physical activity campaigns.

### Discussion

Despite the fact that there are a number of advantages of using social media in the promotion of health, there are also some challenges. Among them, the problem of misinformation is one of the most urgent. The fast-action ability in sharing information on social media also opens the chances of on spreading fake or misconception related to health. Social media has been shown to have negative effects since it puts people at risk of having the wrong information and taking actions based on that information like not taking the vaccine or taking some form of treatment that does not work as it should Naeem SB, et al. [7]. The current and future challenges for health organizations include ensuring that they follow social media accounts in order to identify misinformation and develop accurate and balanced misinformation to counter the spread of it.

Privacy issues remain another vital inhibitor that cannot be ignored since it can also define the difference between the success and failure of a company. People can disclose their health related information in social networks unconsciously thus leading to violation of their privacy. Health organizations must ensure the privacy of the patients and must also give information on how to share such information safely Koohang A, et al. [8]. Further, they should make sure that their communicational practices do not violate ethical rules regarding users' personal data.

To promote health effectively on social media platforms, the appropriate strategies need to be applied by health organizations. This includes producing content which is relevant, valid and which can be proven to have been derived from the right sources. Humor is useful in increasing the usability of health messages because people are likely to relate to it and remember it better; Other strategies include use of polls and quizzes to make the audience be more active Bautista JR, et al. [9]. Social media analytics offer highly beneficial insights when assessing the effects of social media campaigns since it allows organisations to make sure that they are getting the best possible outcome.

### Conclusion

Social media has become an important tool in the process of the changes in the field of health promotion and is considered to be widely advantageous in such perspectives as information sharing, community involvement, and behavior modification. That is why despite the barriers like the fake news and risk-related information, social media has many advantages when it comes to engaging the community in

health promotion programs. In partnership with social media and with the application of proper communication strategies that will succeed for the social media platform, improvement of health outcomes among the public can be achieved. Thus, facing the constant development of the digital environment, the approaches to employing social media for improving the health of the population also change.

## References

1. Kudchadkar SR, Carroll CL (2020) Using social media for rapid information dissemination in a pandemic: #PedsICU and coronavirus disease 2019. *Pediatric Critical Care Medicine* 21(8): e538-e546.
2. Yang B, Zhang R, Cheng X, Zhao C (2023) Exploring information dissemination effect on social media: an empirical investigation. *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing* 27(4): 1469-1482.
3. Dash A (2022) Influence of content strategies on community engagement over the healthcare-related social media pages in India. In: Jena OP, et al. (Eds.), *Machine Learning and Deep Learning in Efficacy Improvement of Healthcare Systems*. 1st (Edn.), CRC Press, pp: 61-73.
4. Nusair K, Karatepe OM, Okumus F, Alfarhan UF, Shi F (2024) Exploring the pivotal role of community engagement on tourists' behaviors in social media: A cross-national study. *International Journal of Information Management* 74: 102701.
5. Kamalruzzaman MS, Din SC, Yusof AM, Shamsuddin NAA (2021) State of Art of the Persuasive Technology using Social Media for Behaviour Change in Malaysia. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal* 6(SI6): 3-9.
6. Petkovic J, Duench S, Trawin J, Dewidar O, Pardo JP, et al. (2021) Behavioural interventions delivered through interactive social media for health behaviour change, health outcomes, and health equity in the adult population. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 5(5): CD012932.
7. Naeem SB, Bhatti R, Khan A (2021) An exploration of how fake news is taking over social media and putting public health at risk. *Health Information & Libraries Journal* 38(2): 143-149.
8. Koohang A, Floyd K, Yerby J, Paliszkievicz J (2021) Social media privacy concerns, security concerns, trust, and awareness: Empirical validation of an instrument. *Issues in Information Systems* 22(2): 133-145.
9. Bautista JR, Zhang Y, Gwizdka J (2021) Healthcare professionals' acts of correcting health misinformation on social media. *International Journal of Medical Informatics* 148: 104375.