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Effect Of Social Media On Public Health

Author –

- Dr. Anil Makhijani, H.O.D. & Associate Professor, Department of Surgery, LHIRC, Bhandu, Gujarat.
- Dr. Amit Kumar Arya, Associate Professor, Department of Homoeopathic material medica, LHIRC, Bhandu, Gujarat.
- Dr. Amit Nayak, Associate Professor, Department of Organon of Medicine, CVMHMC, Anand, Gujarat.
- Dr. Prakash Parmar, Associate Professor, Department of Repertory, JJHMC, Godhra, Gujarat.
- Dr. Priyanka Tejabhai Sonapal, Assistant Professor, Department of Repertory, Gokul HMC, Siddhpur, Gujarat.

ABSTRACT

The pervasive influence of social media has transformed various aspect of daily life, including public health. This abstract examines the multifaceted effects of social media on public health exploring both its potential benefits and risks. On one hand, social media platforms facilitate rapid dissemination of health information, enabling public health campaigns to reach diverse populations quickly and efficiently. They also provide support networks for individuals managing chronic conditions and mental health issues, enhancing community engagement and access to resources.

This review synthesizes current research on the influence of social media on public health highlighting the need for balanced approaches that leverage its benefits while mitigation its risks. Future research should focus on developing strategies to improve information accuracy, enhance digital literacy, and promote healthy online behaviors. Addressing these issues is crucial for optimizing the role of social media in supporting public health objectives and improving overall population well-being. Conversely, social media also presents challenges that can negatively impact public health.

The spread of misinformation and health related myths can undermine public health efforts and contribute to harmful behaviors. Additionally, the prevalence of health – related anxiety and the impact of online interactions on mental well – being are areas of concern, with evidence suggesting that excessive social media use may be linked to increased rates of depression and anxiety.

KEY WORDS

Social Media Platforms, Public Health, Social Media, digital health, health communication, health promotion, public awareness, information sharing, information exchange.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, social media has made an appearance, as a powerful and penetrating force, profoundly affecting various aspects of daily life, including the healthcare system. Social media is a new and ever-changing field. Access to the internet, social media platforms and mobile communication all things can be manipulated health information which create adverse effect on public. With billions of people actively engaging on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitters, Instagram, YouTube, Whatsapp, TikTok and LinkedIn, the ways in which health information is shared, consumed and discussed have undergone a radical transformation. Most of the social media platforms accelerate and promotes mostly misinformation, unverified claims, and fake news. Social media's influence on healthcare is multifaceted, encompassing both positive advancements and notable challenges.

A recent study highlighted that a significant portion of mental health advice on TikTok – around 83.7% is misleading.

On the positive side, social media has democratized access to health information, enabling rapid dissemination of knowledge and fostering greater public awareness of health issues. It has facilitated the creation of support communities where individuals with similar health conditions can connect, share experiences, and find emotional support. Furthermore, healthcare professionals and organizations have harnessed social media to enhance patient engagement, promote wellness initiatives, and advance medical research.

However, the integration of social media into the healthcare landscape also brings significant concerns. The spread of misinformation and unverified health claims can lead to public confusion and potentially hazardous behaviors. Additionally, issues related to privacy, data security, and ethical boundaries in online interactions pose ongoing challenges for both patients and healthcare providers.

This introduction provides a foundation for exploring the complex interplay between social media and the healthcare system, highlighting both its transformative potential and critical issues that need to be addressed to ensure that its impact is both positive and sustainable.

A health survey by the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania in 2023 showed a decline in American's confidence in vaccines and increased acceptance of misinformation about vaccines and COVID-19. The survey, conducted from October 5-12, revealed that the percentage of adults skeptical about safety of the COVID vaccines is rising.

PHRASEOLOGY

In the social media platforms so may advertisement present which promoting drugs, and health news. Almost each and every promotion may indicate following phraseology:

1. Misinformation: it refers to distorted, false or misleading information that does not reflect the true state.
2. Disinformation: incorrect information that one spreads deliberately to deceive.
3. Fake News: False stories that appear to be news and spread on the internet and other media.
4. Rumors: Unconfirmed bits of information.
5. Misleading News: news stories that involves using information in a misleading way to make receivers obfuscate and overlook facts.

LAW FOR OBJECTIONABLE ADVERTISEMENTS

To protect the interest of the public an Act was legislated to control the advertisements of drug in certain cases, to prohibit the advertisement for certain purposes of remedies alleged to possess magic qualities to provide for matters connected therewith. In India, this has been done through the Act-Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954. The Citation of the Act is Act no. 21 of 1954. The bill was passed on 30th April 1954 and became and commenced on 1st April 1955. The Act has 19 sections and a proposal for its amendment has been presented on 3rd February 2020.

Recent Amendments

The constitutionality of the Act was challenged in the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court struck down a part of clause (d) of section 3 and the whole of section 8 as invalid. A proposal for amendment of the Act has been presented by the Union Health Ministry on 3rd February 2020. It will be called "The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Various Cases and Judgments

- Hamdard Dawakhana v Union of India.
- Sablok Clinic v The State of Delhi 27 (1985)DLT171, 1984 RLR 661

Disease include in ACT

In The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements Act, 1954, 30 April 1954) Section 5 Prohibition of Advertisement of Magic Remedies for treatment of certain Disease and Disorders – "No person carrying on or purporting to carry on the profession of administering magic remedies shall take any part in the publication of any advertisements referring to any magic remedy which directly or indirectly claims to be efficacious for any of the purpose specified in section 3.

Schedule – Disease and Ailments (by whatever Name described) which a drug may not purport to prevent or cure or make claims to prevent or cure, including following disease conditions: Appendicitis, Arteriosclerosis, Blindness, Blood Poisoning, Bright's disease, Cancer, Cataract, Deafness, Diabetes, Disease and Disorders of Brain, Disease and Disorders of the optical system, Disease and disorders of Uterus, Disorders of menstrual flow, Disorders of the nervous system, Disorders of prostatic glands, Dropsy, Epilepsy, Female Disease (in general), Fevers (in general), Fevers (in general), Fits, Form and structure of the female breast, Gall stones, Kidney stones, and bladders stones, Gangrene, Glaucoma, Goiter, Heart Disease, High/Low Blood pressure, Hydrocele, Hysteria, Infantile paralysis, Insanity, Leprosy, Leucoderma, Lockjaw, Locomotors ataxia, Lupus, Nervous debility, Obesity, Paralysis, Plague, Pleurisy, Pneumonia, Rheumatism, Ruptures, Sexual Impotence, Small pox, Stature of persons, Sterility in women, Trachoma, Tuberculosis, Tumors, Typhoid fever, Ulcers of the gastro-intestinal tract., Venereal disease, including syphilis, gonorrhea, soft chancre, venereal granuloma and lympho granuloma

In the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable advertisements) Rules, 1955 include Asthma and AIDS also.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Positive Impacts on Public Health:

- **Information Dissemination:** Social media allows for rapid dissemination of public health messages, reaching large and diverse audiences. This capability is particularly useful in emergency situations where timely information is critical.
- **Health Campaigns:** Campaigns on social media can raise awareness about various health issues, from chronic disease management to healthy lifestyle promotion. These platforms enable targeted messaging and engagement with specific communities.
- **Support Networks:** Social media provides platforms for individuals to connect with others experiencing similar health issues, creating supportive communities that share advice and encouragement.
- **Behavioral Change:** There is evidence that social media interventions can effectively promote positive health behaviors, such as increased physical activity or improved dietary habits.

Negative Impacts on Public Health:

- **Misinformation:** The spread of misinformation and pseudoscience on social media can undermine public health efforts. False claims about treatments or disease prevention can lead to harmful behaviors and public confusion.
- **Privacy Concerns:** Sharing health-related information on social media can lead to breaches of privacy and misuse of personal data. This raises concerns about data security and the ethical handling of sensitive information.
- **Mental Health Issues:** The impact of social media on mental health is a growing concern. Studies suggest that excessive use of social media can contribute to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Cyberbullying and online harassment are also significant issues that affect mental well-being.
- **Addiction and Sedentary Behavior:** Overuse of social media may contribute to sedentary lifestyles and reduce face-to-face social interactions, potentially impacting physical health and overall well-being.

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