

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN INCREASING PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS

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Abstract

This study highlights the role of social media in enhancing health awareness among the community. Based on a systematic literature review, this research analyzes the current situation where social media serves as a primary platform for disseminating health information. However, issues such as the spread of inaccurate information and hoaxes can mislead the public. The proposed solutions include digital literacy education for the community to better filter information, as well as collaboration with health professionals and relevant institutions to provide valid health content. The conclusion of this study is that social media has great potential in improving health awareness, but it requires proper control and education to maximize its benefits and minimize the risk of spreading misinformation.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Health Awareness, Health Education, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, affecting various aspects of life, including public health. Through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others, health information can be disseminated quickly and widely. However, behind its potential, social media also carries the risk of spreading inaccurate information or hoaxes related to health. This condition reflects the real situation where people are often faced with diverse information and not all of it can be trusted (M. P. Sari et al., 2022a).

In an era of globalization filled with technological advances, the internet has become very important for everyday life. A survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Network Providers (APJII) in 2023 showed that more than half of Indonesia's population has been connected to the internet. The results showed that 215.6 million people out of 275.7 million people in Indonesia have been connected to the internet, showing an increase of 78.19% of the total population. In addition, as reported by Katadata Media Network, the 2023 wearesocial.com data report shows that around 213 million people in Indonesia use the internet, with almost 77% or almost half of them being social media users. This figure has increased compared to the 2022 data report which showed that around 51% or 202 million people in Indonesia use the internet. Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Reddit, Instagram, WhatsApp, and blogs are social media platforms used to make health

information easily accessible (Abuhashesh et al., 2021).

Social media has developed into one of the media for education, in addition to functioning as a medium of entertainment, social media can also be used to search for information and questions about health. Social media provides a variety of health information in new and innovative ways through visually appealing content such as videos, infographics, and other multimedia. Health organizations and professionals also use social media to disseminate information on various topics, such as healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and treatment. One of the major challenges in health promotion is building a strategy to change healthy living behavior. Social media is a communication tool that can be used in health promotion to increase awareness of healthy living behavior (M. P. Sari et al., 2022a).

The potential of social media in promoting public health and increasing public awareness of accurate health-related information. Health communication and health promotion activities can increase public awareness to implement a healthy lifestyle. In relation to the use of media as a source of information, people today tend to use the internet as a source of health information. The spread of social media channels can also have an impact on public health-related behaviors. Social media has a greater impact than traditional websites. Several studies have shown how social media can be used as a tool for health interventions, one of which is about healthy living behavior (Abuhashesh et al., 2021). This study aims to conduct a preliminary study of published literature on how social media use can influence healthy living behavior.

This study aims to explore the role of social media in increasing health awareness in the community. The originality of this study lies in its approach based on a systematic literature review, namely reviewing various existing literature to obtain a comprehensive picture of this topic (Yulia, 2018). Based on previous analysis, there have not been many studies that specifically explore the educational and informative role of social media in the context of health with strict and systematic methods.

The main problem that is the focus is how social media can be used effectively to educate the public about health and how to filter valid information from invalid information. This problem is increasingly crucial considering the increasing amount of information circulating in cyberspace along with the rapid development of digital technology.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of social media on public health awareness and to formulate strategies to maximize the use of this platform. This is done through digital literacy and collaboration between the community, health professionals, and related institutions, to ensure that the information disseminated has educational value and is based on reliable facts.

Overall, this study is expected to provide significant contributions in understanding the dynamics of the role of social media in the context of public health and offer practical solutions that can be implemented to minimize existing problems.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This study was conducted using the systematic literature review (SLR) method to assess the role of social media in increasing public health awareness. The implementation process began with a search for relevant journals through Google Scholar, spanning the years 2018 to 2024, to ensure that the data and findings used were sufficiently up-to-date. The search procedure was carried out using keywords such as "social media," "health awareness," and "health education." After that, the articles found were selected based on their relevance, validity, and quality, and filtered using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data analysis was carried out using the thematic synthesis method to identify patterns, themes, and insights related to the research topic. The results of this literature review were then reported in the form of a comprehensive narrative, providing an in-depth overview of how social media can be utilized as a tool to increase public health awareness.

RESULTS

Table 1. Summary of Reference Articles

No	Title, Author and Year	Method	Result	Conclusion
1	Peran Media Terhadap Perilaku Protokol Kesehatan di Indonesia Mega Puspa Sari, dkk (2022).	Literature Review	Media is an important tool to improve health protocol behavior, namely washing hands with running water, maintaining distance and avoiding crowds, and always wearing a mask.	The role of media for public health is very important in health promotion in order to change and improve health behavior in society. The important role that media can play in the current pandemic is to improve health protocol behavior, namely washing hands with running water and/or using hand sanitizer, maintaining distance and avoiding crowds and always wearing a mask
2	Evolving Role of Social Media in Health Promotion Rajshri R, Malloy J (2023)	Literature Review	Provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving role of social media in health promotion. By understanding the potential benefits and limitations of social media	Social media serves as a platform to enhance and promote strategies for translational health communication and the effective dissemination of data. It enables users to not only access but also create and share relevant health information.
3	Optimalisasi Penggunaan Media Sosial Dalam Pemasaran Sosial Dan Komunikasi Perubahan Perilaku Irla Yulia (2018)	Literature Review	Social media can be used as a means of social marketing so that health communication created on the channel will ultimately bring about behavioral changes in individuals or their communities. The selection of social media	Social marketing and behavior change communication are an integral part of health promotion and are one of the most important strategies that must be implemented by health promoters in order to achieve public health goals.

			that is appropriate to the characteristics of the target audience and proper management of social media will certainly have a positive impact on changes in the behavior of the target audience.
4	Peran Media Sosial dalam Meningkatkan Kesadaran Kesehatan Masyarakat selama Pandemi COVID-19 Abuhashesh MY, et al (2021)	Literature Review	Important role in raising public awareness about health during the COVID-19 pandemic.
			This research addresses a gap in the literature by providing a thorough understanding of social media campaigns, specifically examining the types of platforms, message appeals, and sources of message senders during the COVID-19 global pandemic across different countries. It also makes a significant contribution by reinforcing traditional communication theory, which posits that the success of health promotion programs heavily depends on selecting the right communication tools, such as social media platforms.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Social Media in Increasing Public Health Awareness

Social media platforms have become an important part of our daily lives. Social media is different from other media and has become one of the main communication tools that is widely used by society today (Sari et al., 2022). Various social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to TikTok, have become powerful tools for health promotion to disseminate health information, and encourage healthy living behaviors. Social media can help health policy and promotion by raising awareness, engaging the community, and collecting data (Roy & Malloy, 2023).

Social media can be used to change behavior. The development of information technology brings about a change in society. The birth of social media has caused a shift in the pattern of people's behavior in terms of culture, ethics and existing norms. The existence of social media has influenced social life and health in society (Stellefson et al., 2020). Changes in social relationships or as changes to balance (equilibrium) or changes to healthy living behavior.

1) Rapid and Widespread Information Dissemination

Social media allows health information to be disseminated quickly and reach a wide audience in a short time. With a large network of users, information on health campaigns, disease prevention, and health warnings can be accessed by millions of people around the world with just one click.

2) Public Interaction and Participation

These platforms allow for two-way interaction between information providers and the public. Users can ask questions, share experiences, and provide feedback, which encourages higher levels of participation and engagement in health issues.

3) Personalization and Targeted Messaging

Social media allows health messages to be customized according to the target audience. This means that information can be tailored to the specific needs of certain demographic groups, increasing the relevance and effectiveness of health communications.

4) Increased Health Literacy

By utilizing visual and interactive content such as videos and infographics, social media can improve public health literacy. This visual-based content is easier to digest and understand, helping people understand complex health information.

5) Platforms for Health Influencers and Advocates

Many health influencers and advocates use social media to raise public awareness about health issues. They can influence people's health behaviors and attitudes by sharing healthy living tips, personal experiences, and credible medical information (I. R. Sari et al., 2019).

Social media via the internet has great potential for health promotion and other health interventions, and it is easier to reach targets at every level. Empirical evidence shows that the use of social media is effective in health promotion efforts with the aim of increasing understanding and providing support to the community to behave healthily, but it cannot be denied that behind the success of the media there are several weaknesses. The solution to these weaknesses is to increase the role of health professionals in managing social media-based health promotion, so that the information is of better quality. Health information can be provided through social media to disseminate accurate and useful medical information (Kusuma et al., 2020).

Health professionals, medical organizations, and health institutions can share news about diseases, the latest medical developments, and health tips to the public. Several studies also mention that social media is also used for health awareness campaigns such as vaccination campaigns, anti-smoking campaigns, or mental health campaigns. Social media is used as a tool to spread their messages. Videos, images, and story-based content are often used to attract attention. Some Influencers use social media to promote a healthy lifestyle. For example, sharing healthy food recipes, exercise routines, and other health tips to their followers. They can provide motivation and inspiration to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The use of social media for health purposes also has several problems, such as the spread of misinformation, data privacy violations, and the risk of social media addiction (Thoriq et al., 2024).

This study suggests that various social media can increase health promotion in women and awareness of menstrual hygiene, breast cancer, breastfeeding techniques, compliance, self-perception, and actions. oral health, exercise, sexual health promotion, road safety awareness, smoking cessation, significant antibiotic use, and adverse drug reaction reporting. Social media has great potential in raising awareness about healthy living behavior (Tama et al., 2022). One of them is collaboration with health influencers

that can help increase the visibility of health messages. Influencers can share personal experiences, tips, and recommendations for products or services that support a healthy lifestyle. Influencers tend to create content in the form of videos, infographics, and interesting images to convey information about healthy living behavior. Social media influencers have great potential to raise awareness about a healthy lifestyle. Influencers can be direct examples of a healthy lifestyle. By sharing their healthy habits, such as exercise, healthy eating, adequate sleep, and stress management, they can motivate their followers to adopt the same behavior (Lestari et al., 2023).

Influencers can provide reviews of products or services that support a healthy lifestyle, such as nutritional supplements, fitness equipment, or health apps. These reviews can help their followers make more informed decisions about their health. Host live sessions or webinars where influencers can speak directly to their followers (Handayani et al., 2023). This can be an opportunity to provide first-hand information, answer questions, and provide direct support. Sharing personal experiences about positive lifestyle changes can make influencers more relatable to their audience. Personal experiences can inspire and motivate people to take steps toward a healthier lifestyle (Findayani, 2020).

CONCLUSION

From the research results, it can be concluded that social media has a significant role in increasing public health awareness. Through the rapid and widespread dissemination of information, as well as the ability to directly engage and educate the public, this platform becomes an effective tool in public health campaigns. Social media also allows for the personalization of health messages that increase relevance to specific audiences, as well as increasing health literacy through interesting and easy-to-understand content. In addition, the presence of influencers and health advocates on social media plays a major role in influencing public health behavior and attitudes. Thus, optimizing the use of social media in public health communication strategies is essential to achieving increased public health awareness and well-being as a whole.

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