

# **The Role of Social Media in Health Promotion Efforts**

**Nurul Fadhilah**

Universitas Sriwijaya, Sumatera Selatan, Indonesia

Email: [nfdhlh14@gmail.com](mailto:nfdhlh14@gmail.com)

## ***Abstract***

*The incidence of disease in Indonesia follows or even exceeds the rate of population growth. Every second, Indonesians suffer from diseases that do not necessarily have effective treatments. It is important to realize that waiting for symptoms to appear before seeking health care is risky. While hospitals have made efforts to promote health and prevent disease, their role in providing health information is limited. The information provided by doctors and medical institutions often does not cover all relevant factors. In the era of rapid information technology, the need for precise and up-to-date information is increasingly becoming a priority. Communities and public institutions are beginning to utilize technology, especially the internet, to gain better access to health information. However, uncontrolled distribution of information can trigger new problems. Therefore, it is important to have organized, clear and precise information to support effective decision-making. An analysis of the potential of online media as a tool to change health behavior is necessary, especially with the widespread penetration of the internet through various devices, including smartphones and tablets.*

**Keywords:** *Role of Social Media. Health Promotion Efforts, Social Media*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The incidence rate of these diseases is almost the same or even faster than the population growth rate in Indonesia. Every second, Indonesians are stricken with a disease for which we may never find a cure - everyone. If a person feels they are suffering from a disease only when symptoms appear, harassing them is a dangerous practice. Measures were taken and I was examined by a doctor and went to the hospital. Despite the measures implemented by the hospital to promote and prevent diseases, the role of the hospital as one of the medical institutions is not sufficient in disclosing health information. There are many unknown factors that arise from reports, publications, and educational information provided by doctors and medical institutions. Similar to diseases, technological advances have reached a level where everyone can obtain information very quickly and cheaply, anytime and anywhere. One of the media that utilizes technology to provide information

quickly is one of the reliability of the internet as a technological phenomenon regarding the use of internet media.

As information technology develops rapidly, the need for accurate, precise and up-to-date information is increasingly becoming the main focus. Communities and public institutions have begun to utilize this technology to gain better access to information. However, it needs to be recognized that scattered information, both positive and negative, has the potential to trigger various problems, especially in the health sector. Therefore, the importance of structuring information in an organized, clear, precise, and fast manner, as well as its ability to be presented in a report format, is crucial in supporting the smooth operation of the organization and effective decision-making. Nowadays, websites are no longer only accessed through desktops, but also through tablet and smartphone devices. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the potential of online media in changing behavior through health education and promotion.

## **METHODS**

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods. According to Sukmadinata (2016), this research aims to provide an overview and describe phenomena that occur both naturally and human engineering with a focus on the characteristics, quality and interrelationships between activities. The data source used in this research is secondary data. According to Sugiyono (2018) secondary data is a data source that does not directly provide data to data collectors. Secondary data in this study were obtained from reference books, journal documents, online news, archives and other literature reviews. The data collection method in this study was carried out through analysis, describing and explaining the condition of the data situation in the field based on the research problem being studied.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Social media through the internet [1, 2] has great potential for health promotion and other health interventions [3], and is easier to reach the target at every level [4-6]. For this reason, this paper needs to describe theoretically about: 1) health promotion and its urgency in using social media, 2) The characteristics of

social media in health promotion and its weaknesses, 3) the role of health professionals in conducting social media-based health promotion.

#### **A. Health Promotion and the Urgency of Using Social Media**

WHO's goal is to improve health by focusing on factors that impact health and increasing the ability of individuals and communities to improve their health status. Based on the definition developed by WHO, Indonesia has developed a definition of health promotion as “efforts to improve community performance through learning from, through, and (voluntarily) supporting local communities.” Resource-based community activities can be developed according to local socio-culture and supported by health-oriented public policies. ” Resource-based community activities can be developed according to local socio-culture and supported by health-oriented public policies.

According to the International Conference on Health Promotion in Ottawa, Canada, health promotion is empowering people to maintain and improve their own health. Social media can increase access to health information and change positive behaviors, complementing conventional health promotion. Empirical evidence shows social media is effective in disease prevention interventions such as smoking cessation, disseminating cancer information, improving adolescents' knowledge on reproductive health, diabetes, and fitness through platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. Health information is also available on social networking sites and the web, including topics on sexual health, healthy diet, maternity, and adolescent girls' health. Hospitals also utilize online media to enhance their image with information on healthy lifestyles and emergencies. Online health promotion is also relevant in the workplace, addressing employee health.

Technology in the form of social media has enabled increased knowledge of disease and prevention, better utilization of health services, improved medication adherence, increased participation in health decision-making, and increased social support and sharing of support with others. Thus, people can independently share experiences related to positive changes in healthy behaviors, physical changes, side effects of diseases, and positive health impacts of lifestyles. Overall, the research-based literature suggests that social media contributes positively to the achievement

of health promotion goals. Therefore, it is expected that health professionals can collaboratively use and integrate social media in their health promotion strategies.

## **B. Characteristics of Social Media in Health Promotion and its weaknesses**

The digital age, known as Web 2.0 or Health 2.0 or Medicine 2.0, has changed the way healthy people and patients seek healthcare information by relying more on the internet than direct consultations with doctors. Popular social media websites have proven effective in disseminating health information and supporting health promotion. Sites such as YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and Second Life, as well as other platforms such as image sharing, mobile technology, and blogs, are all accessible online. Here is a brief overview of these media.

### *Youtube*

More than 100 million videos are viewed on YouTube every day, and that number continues to rise. Several recent public health studies have looked at videos hosted on YouTube about papillomavirus vaccination and tobacco messages and “wormy” canned food. Researchers point to the potential power that YouTube holds for personalized health decision-making.

### *Facebook*

The use of social networking sites continues to grow, becoming a very popular platform for interaction and content sharing. Facebook, as the most dominant social networking site, has over 750 million users with the average user creating 90 pieces of content per month. Sites like Facebook offer a direct and personal way to deliver programs, products and information to the general public. On Facebook, there are pages devoted specifically to healthcare, public health professionals, and so on. A positive relationship is seen between health information seekers and the use of this social networking site.

### *Twitter*

Twitter is a very popular microblogging platform in the United States, with over 305 million monthly active users. Especially popular with teenagers and young adults, Twitter has a 140-character limit for each tweet, making it short and easy to respond to. Twitter users play an active role by not only receiving, but also sharing

and re-sending messages. Potential audiences include high school students, health students, health education lecturers/teachers, and health professionals.

### *Second Life*

Second Life allows users to interact with many formats, including audio, video, images and text, and brings people “together” in a virtual space when they are geographically distant. Second Life dermatology can offer patients a site with expert opinions from around the world or online support groups for specific diseases.

### *Image Sharing*

In the digital age, image sharing has become an added value in health communication. Public health images can be easily placed on various online platforms such as websites, blogs and social media. As content creation on social media and the internet grows, the demand for fresh graphics and engaging content is increasing. The use of mobile phones with cameras has made it easier to take photos, while mobile apps and active participation in social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have increased the popularity of online photo sharing. More than 100 million photos are uploaded to Facebook every day. With this trend, organizations can capitalize on it by providing visual images that showcase public health actions, reinforce health messages, or present information in a visually appealing format.

### *Mobile Technology*

Two-way communication directly or indirectly. Today many cell phones have cameras to take pictures or short duration videos that can be viewed on the phone, downloaded to one of the computers, or transmitted to others. The data processing and storage capabilities in cell phones are increasing every year and, through server network connections, support the transmission and analysis of data in various forms, including text, numerical files, graphics, audio, and video such as “Smart phones”. Cell phones can access wireless data networks at any time, sometimes there is an additional feature of radio that allows fast data exchange over

the internet in multiple locations. Some cell phones can communicate with other electronics through the use of Bluetooth [54]. Cell phone technology is becoming more powerful and cheaper, with evidence beginning to emerge of the delivery of health care services and personal health promotion via cell phones.

### *Blog*

A blog (short for weblog) is a web application in the form of appearing in text format (published as posts) on a website. However, this is not always accurate. Such sites are usually accessible to all Internet users, depending on the topic and purpose of the blog user.

Social media has been empirically proven to promote health promotion by increasing public awareness and encouraging healthy behaviors. However, there are some vulnerabilities in this medium. Information exchanges on social media need to be monitored, evaluated, and checked for quality and reliability. Robust and comprehensive evaluations using multiple methodologies are needed to determine whether social media improves health promotion practices in the short and long term. This involves measuring the influence of the media, the costs of social media, and its benefits and effectiveness as a health promotion tool.

International research has found a number of weaknesses and challenges in using social media to promote health. Firstly, there is a tendency for people to be passive rather than active information seekers, which means that not all information shared is accessible to the public. There are also issues with accessibility for people who are not connected to networks. Secondly, easy and quick access to health information via the internet can create an information imbalance, as anyone can input information without having expertise in the health field. This is potentially harmful as it can lead to over-consumption of information. Thirdly, most information on social media is unverified and may be inaccurate, causing confusion and difficulty in selecting the right information. Fourth, health professionals often have limitations in managing health information through social media, resulting in suboptimal utilization. Finally, the lack of interaction between information seekers and health professionals results in a lack of interest from the public in visiting these sites, which may hinder the sustainability of health promotion programs on social media.

### **C. The role of health professionals in social media-based health promotion**

The pessimistic view of social media's ability to influence health behavior change that has not significantly decreased highlights doubts about its effectiveness in health promotion efforts. To overcome these doubts, it is important for health professionals to enhance the role and quality of media-based health promotion. Proposed steps include the application of social media concepts proven to work in business contexts, integration of social media with social marketing strategies, development of strategic communication plans that utilize social media, evaluation of the impact of content delivered on social media, and thorough assessment of the effectiveness of health promotion programs using process evaluation and impact evaluation frameworks. In addition, health professionals are expected to form multidisciplinary teams, select content by considering current issues, and adopt appropriate internet approaches to strengthen public health. It is also important to maximize information exposure by using robust evidence and clarifying the role of professionals in supporting the use of social media. All these actions aim to effectively utilize social media as a health promotion tool.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

In the context of rapid development of information technology, the need for accurate and up-to-date information, especially in the health sector, is increasing. Social media through the internet is considered to have great potential in conducting health promotion and other interventions, as it can reach targets at various levels. Although empirical evidence shows the success of using social media in health promotion efforts to increase public understanding and support for healthy behaviors, it cannot be denied that there are some weaknesses behind the success of these media. One solution to overcome these weaknesses is to increase the role of health professionals in managing social media-based health promotion, so that the information delivered is of higher quality. Health professionals can take steps such as identifying audiences, selecting appropriate content, adopting effective strategies from other fields such as business, providing accurate and up-to-date data-based information, increasing audience and service provider participation, and

conducting monitoring and evaluation to ensure the success and sustainability of online promotion programs.

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