

INFLUNCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HEALTH DECISIONS

2.1 General Overview

A social media platform serves as an online space where individuals connect and forge relationships with others who have similar personal or professional interests, backgrounds, activities, or real-life connections (Akram, 2018). Social media encompasses the use of computer-mediated technology to foster the exchange and dissemination of ideas, interests, career pursuits, information, and various forms of expression within social networks and virtual communities (Abbas et al., 2019). The influence of social networks on adolescents is substantial, with a growing recognition that these platforms have integrated into individuals' daily existence (Akram, 2018). Social media significantly affects the daily routines of young people, especially university students; platforms like digital media and social networking are transforming how they communicate, collaborate, share information, and consume content on a daily basis (Abbas et al., 2019). Social media is widely recognized as a primary platform for sharing information, expressing opinions, building social connections, influencing decisions, and promoting businesses (Karatsoli & Nathanail, 2020). People on social media have greater control over how involved and how much they connect with others, compared to interactions that take place in person (Naslund et al., 2016). The internet has transformed into an interactive platform where everyone has the opportunity to engage and contribute. Particularly in the realm of healthcare, social media has revolutionized the conventional dynamic between patients and physicians (Colineau & Paris, 2010). The internet offers an abundance of information covering various aspects of diseases, ranging from their origins and genetic bases to the specifics of how they manifest, progress in symptoms, and the treatments that prove effective (Graham et al., 2016).

2.2 Health practices and behavior

Making decisions about one's health involves making a variety of decisions about everything from lifestyle choices to available medical treatments. For numerous individuals, incorporating technologies like computers, tablets, and smartphones to connect to the Internet and social media platforms has become crucial for maintaining social relationships in their everyday routines (Chidiac et al., 2022). Experts in health promotion have quickly realized how important social media is for reaching a variety of audiences in social marketing campaigns and empowering people to take control of their health and contacts with healthcare providers (Korda & Itani, 2013). According to Korda & Itani, 2013, looking up health information comes right after checking email and using search engines as the most common online activity for adults. Through social media, individuals may have the opportunity to connect with others facing similar struggles, reaping the rewards of group involvement on their own schedules, all while maintaining anonymity and sidestepping the difficulties linked with interpersonal shortcomings like understanding social cues or non-verbal signals (Naslund et al., 2016). Social media platforms allow users to decide whether to remain anonymous or reveal their identity.

The preferences for information and the utilization of online tools vary according to gender, race/ethnicity, educational background, and income level among internet users (Korda & Itani, 2013). According to reports, women tend to search more frequently for information regarding symptoms, treatments, diseases, conditions, and medications compared to men who are more inclined to conduct searches about vitamins, supplements, health insurance providers, and physicians (Korda & Itani, 2013). Interestingly both genders are equally interested in exploring wellness-related topics. Additionally, men show a higher tendency to utilize social media platforms compared to women (Korda & Itani, 2013).

REFERENCE

- Abbas, J., Aman, J., Nurunnabi, M., & Bano, S. (2019). The Impact of Social Media on Learning Behavior for Sustainable Education: Evidence of Students from Selected Universities in Pakistan. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1683. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061683>
- Akram, W. (2018). A Study on Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Society. *International Journal of Computer Sciences and Engineering*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.26438/ijcse/v5i10.351354>
- Chidiac, M., Ross, C., Marston, H. R., & Freeman, S. (2022). Age and Gender Perspectives on Social Media and Technology Practices during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(21), Article 21. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192113969>
- Colineau, N., & Paris, C. (2010). Talking about your health to strangers: Understanding the use of online social networks by patients. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 16(1–2), 141–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614568.2010.496131>
- Graham, A. L., Cobb, C. O., & Cobb, N. K. (2016). The Internet, Social Media, and Health Decision-Making. In M. A. Diefenbach, S. Miller-Halegoua, & D. J. Bowen (Eds.), *Handbook of Health Decision Science* (pp. 335–355). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-3486-7_24
- Karatsoli, M., & Nathanail, E. (2020). Examining gender differences of social media use for activity planning and travel choices. *European Transport Research Review*, 12(1), 44. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12544-020-00436-4>

Korda, H., & Itani, Z. (2013). Harnessing Social Media for Health Promotion and Behavior Change. *Health Promotion Practice, 14*(1), 15–23.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839911405850>

Naslund, J. A., Aschbrenner, K. A., Marsch, L. A., & Bartels, S. J. (2016). The future of mental health care: Peer-to-peer support and social media. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences, 25*(2), 113–122. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045796015001067>