



## The Role of Social Media in Health Promotion Efforts

Nurul Fadhilah<sup>1</sup>

Sriwijaya Universit, Indonesia

e-mail: [nfdh14@gmail.com](mailto:nfdh14@gmail.com)

Input : 05 February 2024

Revised : 10 February 2024

Accepted : 20 February 2024

Published : 24 February 2024

### 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 this disease is almost the same or even faster than the population growth rate in Indonesia. Every second, Indonesians are struck by a disease for which we may not yet have a cure - everyone. If a person only feels they are suffering from a disease when symptoms appear, it is dangerous to ignore it. Action has been taken, and I have been examined by a doctor and gone to the hospital. Although hospitals have implemented measures to promote and prevent disease, their role as medical institutions is not sufficient in terms of disseminating health information. There are many unknown factors that emerge from reports, publications, and educational information provided by doctors and medical institutions. Similar to disease, 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 the reliability of the internet as a technological phenomenon regarding the use of internet media.

As information technology rapidly advances, the need for accurate, precise, and up-to-date information has become a major focus. The public and

public institutions have also begun to utilize this technology to gain better access to information. However, it must be acknowledged that the dissemination of information, both positive and negative, has the potential to trigger various problems, especially in the field of health. Therefore, the importance of organizing information in a regular, clear, accurate, and timely manner, as well as the ability to present it in report format, is crucial in supporting smooth organizational operations and effective decision-making. Currently, websites are no longer only accessed via desktops, but also via tablets and smartphones. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the potential of online media in changing behavior through health education and promotion.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Sukmadinata (2016), this study aims to provide an overview and describe phenomena that occur both naturally and as a result of human engineering, with a focus on the characteristics, quality, and interrelationships between activities. The data source used in this study 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 was 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 conditions of the data in the field based on the research problems being studied.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Social media via the internet [1, 2] has great potential for health promotion and other health interventions [3], and it is easier to reach targets at every level [4-6]. Therefore, this paper will theoretically discuss: 1) health promotion and its urgency 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 Its Importance Using Social Media**

The WHO's goal is to improve health by focusing on factors that impact health and enhancing the ability of individuals and communities to improve their health status. Based on the definition developed by the 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 in accordance with local socio-cultural conditions and supported by health-oriented public policies.

According to the International Conference on Health Promotion in Ottawa, Canada, health promotion is empowering communities to maintain and improve their own health. Social media can increase access to health information and change positive behavior, complementing conventional health promotion. Empirical evidence shows that social media is effective in disease

prevention interventions such as smoking cessation, disseminating information about cancer, increasing adolescent knowledge about 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 such as sexual health, healthy diets, pregnancy, and adolescent girls' health. Hospitals also utilize online media to enhance their image by providing information on healthy lifestyles and emergency conditions. Online health promotion is also relevant in the workplace, addressing employee health.

Social media technology has enabled increased public knowledge about diseases and their prevention, better use of health services, improved adherence to treatment, 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 behavior, physical changes, side effects of disease, and the positive impact of lifestyle on health. Overall, research-based literature indicates that social media contributes positively to the achievement of health promotion goals. Therefore, it is hoped that health professionals can collaboratively use and integrate social media into 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 on 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.

##### 1. Youtube

More than 100 million videos are viewed on YouTube every day, and that number continues to grow. Several recent public health studies have looked at videos hosted on YouTube about papillomavirus vaccination and messages about tobacco and canned foods containing worms. Researchers point to YouTube's potential power for personal health decision-making.

##### 2. 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 more than 750 million users, with the average user creating 90 pieces of content per month. Sites such as Facebook offer a direct and personal way to convey programs, products, and information to the general public. On Facebook, there are pages specifically dedicated to health services, public health professionals, and so on. A positive relationship is seen between health information seekers and the use of these social networking sites.

3. Twitter

Twitter is a very popular microblogging platform in the United States, with more than 305 million monthly active users. Particularly popular among teenagers and young adults, Twitter has a 140-character limit for each tweet, making it concise and easy to respond to. Twitter users play an active role by not only receiving, but also sharing and reposting messages. Potential audiences include high school students, health science students, health education lecturers/teachers, and health professionals.

4. 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? It can offer patients a site with expert opinions from around the world or online support groups for specific diseases.

5. Image Sharing

In the digital age, sharing images has become an added value in health communication. Public health images can be easily posted on various online platforms such as websites, blogs, and social media. Along with the growth of content creation on social media and the internet, the demand for fresh graphics and interesting content has increased. The use of mobile phones with cameras has made it easier to take photos, while mobile applications 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 take advantage of it by providing visual images that show public health actions, reinforce health messages, or present information in a visually appealing format.

6. Mobile Technology

Direct and indirect two-way communication. Today, many mobile phones have cameras for taking pictures or short videos that can be viewed on the phone, downloaded to a computer, or transmitted to other people. Data processing and storage capabilities in mobile phones are increasing every year and, through server network connections, support the transmission and analysis of data in various forms, including text, numeric files, graphics, audio, and video, such as "smartphones." Mobile phones can access wireless data networks at any time, and sometimes have additional radio features that enable fast data exchange via the internet in some locations. Some mobile phones can communicate with other electronic devices using Bluetooth [54]. Mobile phone technology is becoming more powerful and cheaper, with evidence emerging of the delivery of healthcare services and personal health promotion via mobile phones.

7. Blog

A blog (short for weblog) is a web application that appears in text format (published as posts) on a website. However, this is not always accurate. Similar 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 by raising public awareness and encouraging healthy behaviors. However, there are several vulnerabilities in this medium. The exchange of information on social media needs to be monitored, evaluated, and checked for quality and reliability. A robust and comprehensive evaluation using various methodologies is 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 identified a number of weaknesses and challenges in using social media to promote health. First, there is a tendency for people seeking information to be passive rather than active, which means that not all information disseminated is accessible to the public. There are also issues related to accessibility for people who are not connected to the internet. Second, easy and quick access to health information via the internet can create an imbalance of information, because anyone can post information without having expertise in the field of health. This has the potential to be dangerous because it can lead to excessive consumption of information. Third, most information on social media is unverified and may be inaccurate, causing confusion and difficulty in selecting the correct information. Fourth, health professionals often have limitations in managing health information through social media, resulting in suboptimal utilization. Finally, minimal interaction between information seekers and health professionals results in a lack of public interest in visiting these sites, which can hinder the continuity of health promotion programs on social media.

#### C. The role of health professionals in promoting health through social media

A pessimistic view of social media's ability to influence significant changes in health behavior highlights doubts about its effectiveness in health promotion efforts. To address these doubts, it is important for health professionals to enhance the role and quality of media-based health promotion. The proposed steps include applying social media concepts that have proven successful in a business context, integrating social media with social marketing strategies, developing strategic communication plans that utilize social media, evaluating the impact of content delivered on social media, and conducting a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of health promotion programs using a process evaluation and impact evaluation framework. In addition, health professionals are expected to form multidisciplinary teams, select content considering current issues, and adopt appropriate internet approaches to strengthen public health. It is also important to maximize information exposure by using strong evidence and clarifying the role of professionals in supporting the use of social media. All of these actions aim to effectively utilize

social media as a health promotion tool.

## CONCLUSION

In the context of rapid information technology development, the need for accurate and up-to-date information, especially in the field of health, is increasing. Social media via the internet is considered to have great potential in promoting health 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 several 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 conveyed 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.

## REFERENCES

- Barakhsanova, E. A., et al. (2016). Internet access and youth of Yakutia awareness on the health promotion factor. *International Journal of Environmental & Science Education*, 11(18), 11477–11484.
- Gerung, J. (2021). *Media sosial dalam digital marketing kesehatan*. Guepedia.
- Jatmika, S. E. D., Maulana, M., & Maulana, M. (2019). *Pengembangan media promosi kesehatan*. K-Media.
- Junaedi, F., Triyanti, E., & Prabowo, T. (2023). Optimalisasi promosi kesehatan dengan menggunakan website dan media sosial di Rumah Sakit dr. Karmini Kota Tasikmalaya. *Jurnal Abdi Masyarakat Indonesia*, 3(5), 1369–1376.
- Khansa, S. N. (2022). *Media sosial sebagai media promosi kesehatan*.
- Kusumawardani, D. A., & Werdani, K. E. (2019). Analisis penggunaan media sosial dalam program promosi kesehatan di Rumah Sakit Umum Daerah dr. Moewardi Surakarta. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta*.
- Levac, D., & Sullivan, T. (2018). Interactive social media interventions for health behaviour change, health outcomes, and health equity in the adult population. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, Issue 2, Article CD012932. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD012932>
- Leonita, E., & Jalinus, N. (2018). Peran media sosial dalam upaya promosi kesehatan: Tinjauan literatur. *INVOTEK: Jurnal Inovasi Vokasional dan Teknologi*, 18(2), 25–34.
- Pratama, D. E., Subianto, T., & Patalo, R. G. (2022). Edukasi program promosi kesehatan melalui media video dan poster. *Indonesian Journal of Community Service Engineering & Education*, 2(1), 71–76.

- Schoenfelder, E., et al. (2017). Piloting a mobile health intervention to increase physical activity for adolescents with ADHD. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 6, 210–213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2017.03.003>
- Yulia, I. (2018). Optimalisasi penggunaan media sosial dalam pemasaran sosial dan komunikasi perubahan perilaku (suatu pendekatan studi literature review). *HEARTY: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat*, 6(2).