

Social Media and Mental Health Essay

The role of social media in people's lives has increased exponentially over the past decade. The online personas that people create matter to them nearly just as much as their real-life image due to the constant communication and the opportunity to track down their responses to specific posts at any time. As a result, the impact of social media on the mental well-being of its users is worth considering. Sumner et al. point to the positive effects of social media, clarifying that the specified technological innovation can be used as the tool for improving mental health of its users. Namely, the research states that social media allows spreading useful and positive information about health-related issues much faster than traditional media. As a result, the opportunities for increasing the levels of public health and addressing some of the most common public health issues emerge.

The connection between the positivity of a message and its reception in social media is a crucial piece of information that needs to be incorporated into the current approach toward increasing the levels of public health, citizens' health literacy, and the accessibility of health services. Namely, the conclusions that Sumner et al. make concerning the direct correlation between the positivity of a message and the likelihood of it being transmitted to a greater number of people should be used as the tool for encouraging better health management: "Sheer volume of supportive content provided by produced by organizations or individuals may be less important than creating higher-quality messages" (p. 143). Thus, the conclusion that the authors provide should be used to enhance the efficacy and accessibility of the current health services.

One could argue that the general research outcomes should be seen as quite upsetting given the implications that they provide. Namely, the fact that the work of health professionals, who perform meticulous studies and arrange the data as carefully as possible to provide accurate and concise guidelines may be less important than an upbeat yet empty message is a rather sad idea. The specified conclusions may lead to a drop in the extent of health practitioners' and nurse educators' enthusiasm in providing the services of the highest quality.

However, the message that Sumner et al. convey could also be seen as an opportunity for enhancing health education and raising health literacy within the community by building a better rapport with its members. Namely, the data about the significance of the use of positivity in social networks as the tool for attracting the attention of patients and target audiences should be utilized to shape the current approach toward promoting health literacy. Specifically, healthcare practitioners and registered nurses, especially those that address the issues of patient education directly, need to create the strategy for the online conversation with patients through social media. The specified dialogue could be based on a combination of positive messages and clear visuals that inform patients about key issues in health management and provide them with an opportunity to improve their health literacy.

Additionally, the authors have provided an important tool for the development of a campaign aimed at public health management and improvement. Namely, based on the outcomes of the research carried out by Sumner et al. have informed the strategies for improving communication between patients and nurse educators. The specified change in how people perceive health

management is especially important in the context of the present-day epidemic of coronavirus. Given the rapid spread of the epidemic and its recent transformation into the pandemic, reinforcing the instructions for people to remain safe is an essential task for APRNs and healthcare experts worldwide. In turn, the application of social media suits perfectly for the described purpose since it allows sharing information instantly and providing people with clear and concise guidelines for them to follow. Although social media mostly do not allow for detailed descriptions of specific health concerns and profound analysis of these issues, they serve their purpose of bulletin boards with clear and distinct guidelines that the members of the global community can apply to their daily routine.

Specifically, the use of positive messages in social media will reinforce the importance of guidelines and ensuring that people will follow them properly. For instance, Sumner et al. mention that the use of social networks has helped to promote social sharing. As the authors explain, "In topic areas such as cancer support, investigators found that the degree of positive sentiment in a message is associated with increased message spread" (Summer et al, p. 143). Therefore, the inclusion of positive thinking and positive emotions into the process of knowledge sharing enhances the extent to which people are willing to engage in the discussion. Moreover, the rise in the inclination to share a message that is positive will allow fighting some of the most severe health concerns that the global community is facing presently, primarily, the coronavirus.

Furthermore, the discussion sparked by the authors raises the question of inaccurate health-related information in social media and the means of filtering data. Indeed, for an uninitiated user of social media, discerning between accurate health-related information and the posts that reinforce health-associated myths is virtually impossible. Although some indicators such as the identity of the user posting the information could provide hints regarding the veracity of data, social media users have to rely on their intuition for the most part. Therefore, it is also critical for nurses to develop strategies for shielding social media users from the data that provides a distorted picture of health management.

Finally, the issue of addressing serious health concerns in social media should be discussed as a contentious subject. Given the outcomes of the research performed by Summer et al., it is critical to focus on delivering positive messages to target audiences to increase compliance with the established health management strategies. However, when tackling a serious health concern that has led or may potentially lead to a rapid rise in lethal outcomes, remaining positive becomes quite challenging. Not only will a message sound false in the specified circumstances, but it is also likely to be perceived in a negative light due to the dissonance between the subject matter and the tone of its delivery. Therefore, the outcomes of the study pose a difficult dilemma for educators and healthcare providers to resolve when addressing their target audiences via social media. Namely, retaining positivity while talking about serious issues is likely to become a major stumbling block for most healthcare service members.

The outcomes of the study performed by Summer et al. have offered a range of important insights, the significance of positivity in modern media as the means of encouraging citizens to accept healthy behaviors being one of the key conclusions. However, to apply the specified results to the management of current public health concerns, one will have to shape the existing framework for communicating with patients significantly. Therefore, the research should be seen

as the basis for redesigning the present health education strategy, as well as the approach toward conversing with patients.

Work Cited

Sumner, Steven A., et al. "Factors Associated with Increased Dissemination of Positive Mental Health Messaging on Social Media." *Crisis: The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2019, pp. 141-145. doi:10.1027/0227-5910/a000598.