



HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATIONS: ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTION OF PEOPLE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Social media is one of the easiest ways of communication between business-to-business and business-to-consumer persons. There is a great lack of communications between people when it comes to healthcare and benefits associated with healthcare. Objective of this Research is to assess current attitudes of dental healthcare, pharmaceutical and life sciences people on the topic. It was also done to find that whether the social media should be included in any healthcare communications in between peoples at a greater scale and frequency. Manufacturers, consumers and regulatory bodies have a great amount of debate in the use of social media in healthcare communication. In addition to the obvious regulatory hurdles, research questions the attitude of the people for implementation of social media in health topics.

Key words: Healthcare Communication, Dental Healthcare, Pharmaceutical Science, Life Sciences.

INTRODUCTION

The environment of the social media has evolved a lot since the past. The FDA formed has provided guidelines to maintain health and render it care but still it are insufficient for the benefit of all people. Despite guidelines and requirements for all other channels of communication already in play, social media remains unequally addressed [1]. There are many organizations working to help people to understand the importance of healthcare but still they are not able to approach all people. There is a lack of professional guidance to all people in faraway populations. This can be can one of the reason for the neglected and unawareness about the latest health management. Internet search is a mainstay, delivering an abundance of information of varying accuracy. Social media influences both search and how content is perceived.

We all cannot control the social media but can at least contact the companies who regulate such sites [2]. General population are only aware about the risk of the use of social media and are afraid to use it to its full extend. An obvious opportunity to improve access to educational information is being missed, particularly for adults in the demographic of 50 and above years of age. So it is important to make them aware about such use of social media and know about the general population's attitude

towards the use of social media in healthcare communications [3].

Objectives: The objectives of this study are to assess current attitudes and perceptions of healthcare, pharmaceutical science and life sciences professionals from various perspectives on the opportunities for appropriate use of social media by organizations by gathering feedback from them on current and potential uses of social media.

Aim: To know about the Attitudes and Perception of People on the Use of Social Media for Healthcare Communications.

Methodology: It includes data collection and data analysis.

Data Collection: A pre tested questionnaire based study was conducted on the selected population in Jodhpur. Each was asked to fill the questionnaire and return it to the examiner within 3 days. Written concern was taken from each of the participating person.

Data Analysis: The data was further statistically analyzed

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by factor analysis. This type of analysis reveals the underlying dimensions upon which the survey responses were examined. So, if a number of statements relate to one underlying dimension, they are grouped together. If a single statement does not relate to any of the underlying dimensions, it will stand alone.

RESULTS

When asked about whether marketers should be permitted greater use of social media to promote products and services to the public, it was found that the response was positive. Selected population believed that it was beneficial for them to use YouTube for wider video sharing and making their video available to larger community. Other social sites like Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn were the other methods they were using for sharing the pictures and thoughts. Many believed that there was not a proper guideline for the content to be shared on such sites by the general population but some believe that it was present. Many preferred a picture with sound clip and not a picture alone without any sound clip. Few people believed that FDA was doing its best to help the people and nothing more could be done to improve it. Many also believed that the information provided are manipulated on the social sites are not totally trustworthy. For the question of use of which social media was acceptable, it was found that YouTube, Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn and even text messages were found out to be used by the population for healthcare communication. It was also found that the dental health providers, pharmaceutical and life science persons should be allowed more use of social media for promoting health. FDA was not regulating the healthcare for everyone as per the analysis and some improvement was needed for the healthcare rendering to all the peoples.

DISCUSSION

Social media have a greatest importance in our life now than it used to have earlier. All the people feel

connected with each other via the social sites and some have even found it to be useful for them in many ways. Healthcare communication on social media is a subject of debate with the presence of other better health care professionals [4]. The Food and Drug Act was established in 1906 which gave the FDA power to regulate the communication process to ensure that advertising claims are appropriate and contain a fair balance of the service or product's benefits as well as the risks associated with its use. Transparency and trust have always been important foundational concepts when designing strategy and content for social media.

Unfortunately, the general perception is that companies to date have not been fully transparent in their use of the social media. This can be due to the influence of the chats, rumors and blogs associated with different companies providing healthcare. Companies with the desire to utilize these communication platforms will need to learn from history, be diligent in managing the social media channel – being actively involved in the listening and response – to overcome the existing negative perceptions to ever be viewed as a credible source [5]. This study not only addresses the attitudes and perception on social media in healthcare communication but also the reasons behind the stated preferences and beliefs.

CONCLUSION

The role of social media in healthcare communication cannot be neglected. It has a vast effect on all the people in contact with it. FDA should improve the guidelines on the use of social media on healthcare communication and also provide for better health care of the general population. A lot of people are taking advantage of the health care communications from the social media and are easily seeking professional guidelines for their problems. But the social media does not always provide trust worthy guidance in all aspects of healthcare and is a subject of further debate.

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