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RELYING ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS IN PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUTHS: WITH WHAT RESULT?

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ABSTRACT

Using social media to drive public health campaign has become more very common in today's digital society. The whole idea of using interactive and highly engaging platforms have spurred the use of social media to promote health related information in the recent years. To this end, this study sought to examine the social media awareness campaigns in promoting positive behaviour for the treatment and control of prostate cancer in Lagos State. The broad objective is to know to what extent social media awareness campaigns have deepened audience knowledge on the prevention and treatment of prostate cancer. The study utilized survey design through the use of Google form, an online questionnaire that was systematically share to 400 sampled respondents (the sample size was determined using Taro Yamani from a population male residents in Lagos, estimated to be 9,288,000) in Lagos Mainland. The purposive and accidental sampling methods were used to reach the sample. The results followed a univariate approach by providing descriptive information and interpretation of each unique variables in simple tables, chart and percentages, as well as determining the mean scores. The results show that majority that make up 61.4% of the total are adequately exposed to prostate awareness on social media. On the extent of knowledge spread and propagated through such campaigns up to 75.5% and 76% confirmed that it deepened their knowledge and it provided all they know about the sickness. Respondents confirmed that the messages they saw captured treatments, screening, intervention and other useful information, to the point where they are ready to submit to preventive treatments and screening. The study concludes that social media have become the right channel to promote healthy information for prostate cancer treatment and control.

Keywords: Awareness, Cancer, Health Campaigns, Prostate Cancer, Public Health, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a very popular platform for promoting health related-communication campaigns, this could be because it has the ability to spread information about behaviour change more quickly and widely than the majority of traditional communication strategies (Shi et al., 2016; Ntakirutimana, 2024). Numerous mass media efforts of this type have been proven to be successful. The globally renowned SunSmart campaign, which advocates for the sun protection behaviors of "slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, seek shade, and slide on some sunnies," uses print and broadcast media to spread messages about preventing skin cancer. The Ebola campaign, the COVID-19 campaign, tobacco counter-marketing, the HIV/AIDS campaign, avian influenza, and other initiatives are also aimed at enhancing public health through all media (Farsi 2021).

Using integrated techniques, social media health communication campaigns provide messages intended to inform, influence, and persuade target audiences to adopt or sustain healthy behaviors (Odongo, 2024). There are several ways to spread messages, including social media

platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; websites and digital and electronic materials like flyers and e-posters; and online group interactions like virtual communities and online forums (Farsi, 2021).

According to Latha et al. (2020), social media has the ability to bring together many types of communication platforms for efficient health promotion communication. Accordingly, social media, also known as social networking, is a grouping of individuals linked to one another through interactive relationships that create virtual communities (Ryser, 2023). The internet has developed into a potent worldwide communication tool for health interventions, giving the general population access to a variety of health promotion initiatives and chances to interact with medical experts and other individuals (Kanshan & Gaidhane, 2023).

Nowadays, it appears that a lot of people go to the internet and other forms of media for health-related information. The fact that individuals have actively embraced the internet for health communication and that many people think it improves their health is the basis for this notable rise in the usage of the internet for health information (Chu et al., 2017; Kington et al., 2021). Experts in health promotion believe that the internet is a powerful tool for encouraging healthy behavior changes. (Sousa et al., 2022; Stellefson et al., 2020). In light of this, Webb et al. (2010) contend that online platforms and the internet have grown in popularity as means of providing health treatments intended to encourage healthy behavior.

Social media therefore offer a new dimension for information exchange, social engagements, and human-to-human connections (Masele, 2021). Additionally, it enables users to create groups according to shared interests and invite others to join. This procedure establishes a safe space for internet communities, which may be used to disseminate information about prostate cancer health behavior (Farsi 2021).

Prostate cancer is the second most prevalent disease to affect men worldwide, and its expansion is virtually at an alarming rate in Nigeria. It is urgently necessary to stop its spread. The issue requires immediate attention, according to data from different parts of the world, particularly through the use of communication techniques for efficient information and infection management. Prostate cancer is expected to cause 288,300 new cases and approximately 34,700 deaths in 2023, according to the American Cancer Society (American Cancer Society, 2023; Jain et al., 2023).

Prostate cancer has been identified as the most common malignancy among Nigerian males. The fact that Nigeria has one of the highest rankings on the list for prostate cancer susceptibility makes it even more concerning (Ntekim et al., 2023). Prostate cancer makes up almost 26% of all male malignancies in Nigeria, according to the country's National Cancer Registry. In Nigeria, an estimated 14,000 new cases of prostate cancer are detected annually. Additionally, it has been shown that over 40% of males aged 40 and older had advanced prostate cancer. The primary causes of the rising number of prostate cancer-related fatalities include ignorance, delayed treatment, and inadequate medical infrastructure (Guardian, 2022).

Therefore, since the situation is becoming very common in Nigeria, it has become absolutely important to ensure adequate communication on prevention and treatment measures reach all sections of the nations as a matter of urgency. (Ndumbe-Eyoh & Mazzucco, 2021; Jackson et al., 2021). It would then be imperative to utilize social media to mobilize knowledge and improve the use of research evidence; teach, educate, and empower people about health concerns; assess public perception; promote quick access to public health information; mobilize community partnerships and action; and gather surveillance data. Therefore, this study aims to address existing gaps in the literature and offer compelling empirical data and literature to support a solid academic viewpoint on the pandemic.

Strong evidence that health communication messages on social media have developed into effective channels for information consumption and dissemination, raising public awareness and influencing health legislation, can be seen in the growing popularity of social media platforms among users with health agendas and in the context of health care (Charalambous, 2019). It might potentially reach large audiences; when social media users share and debate health

information, many more individuals can be reached. Social media is used by people, companies, and organizations to disseminate information about health. The majority of individuals worldwide now use social media on a daily basis (Roy & Malloy, 2023).

Research has demonstrated a robust correlation between the use of social media for the dissemination of health-related information, the discussion of health care policy and practice concerns, the encouragement of positive behaviours and awareness, and the engagement for positive results (Ventola, 2014). Social media platforms' interactive and participatory features enable the creation and dissemination of information to a broad, dispersed, and diverse audience. They also provide new ways to encourage customer participation and partnership, alter their behaviour, and combat unhealthy lifestyles. In 2015, Santoso et al. Accordingly, governments and organizations may utilise social media networks as instruments to stop the spread of health risks, including HIV, chronic illnesses, kidney stones, and cancer (Tursunbayeva et al., 2017).

More precisely, studies have shown that prostate cancer is a serious condition. According to data from the World Health Organisation, 1,414,259 instances of prostate cancer were detected in 2020, making it the third most frequent disease. According to the American Cancer Society (2023), the illness was the second most common cause of death for males in the United States. According to research, the most frequent illness among African males is the most common kind of cancer that affects men in Nigeria (van der Doelen, 2021). There is strong evidence that prostate cancer is becoming more and more of an epidemic in Nigeria (Onyeodi et al. 2022).

Given the alarming prevalence and severity of prostate cancer in Nigeria, research has shown that most men are either unaware of the disease's seriousness, do not know enough about it, or have not yet had a prostate cancer test (Onyeodi et al. 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to assess how social media might be used to raise awareness about prostate cancer prevention and its spread in Nigeria.

How Social Media Enhances Public Awareness and Knowledge of Prostate Cancer

The participatory or social web, sometimes known as Web 2.0, is characterised by a move away from information storage and toward user-generated content. Through encouraging people to seek care for common symptoms and increasing knowledge and participation in cancer screening, these platforms provide a novel and unique opportunity to enhance cancer outcomes (Dunn et al., 2017; Good Things Foundation, 2018; Owen, 2017; Schliemann, 2019). There are five main ways that social media may be used to promote health and overall well-being, according to Neiger et al. (2012): (1) Interact with the audience to get insights; (2) create and promote a brand; (3) provide critical information; (4) expand reach to include larger, more varied audiences; and (5) promote public involvement.

Current data from the Office for National Statistics shows that social media use is becoming more widespread, with 65% of individuals using the internet for social networking in 2018 compared to 45% in 2011 (Office of National Statistics, 2018). This shift in internet usage has made it a high priority to look at ways to use social media to reach the public with health messaging (Korda & Itani, 2013). Public health campaigns disseminated through social media platforms can influence behaviour using the same processes as mass media efforts by directly targeting cognitive or emotional reactions, igniting community debates, and changing social norms (Wakefield, 2013). Furthermore, social media provides a forum for rapid discussion and dissemination of health information via online networks and direct communication between users (Jackson, 2015; Shi et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2016; Welch, 2018).

There are several advantages of using social media platforms to promote health. Particularly beneficial is the ability to target messaging to specific regions or hard-to-reach demographic groups, such as those who are known to have low symptom comprehension or other obstacles to getting screened for cancer (Dunn, 2018; Whyte-Smith, 2018). Consequently, compared to more traditional mass media initiatives, social media allows for a more targeted approach to addressing health disparities (Chou, 2018). In order to facilitate instantaneous and real-time contact between patients and healthcare providers, social media platforms have been reported to include tools for

tracking and monitoring communication information stored on platforms (Gandomi, 2015). Finally, as social media is a vital part of their everyday lives, reaching teenagers and young adults online with public health campaign messaging may be a more realistic approach (Rideout & Fox, 2018). Social media awareness-building for prostate cancer may be a potent tool for enlightening, encouraging, and supporting this crucial cause. A "socially mediated avenue" for the dissemination of health-related information is provided by social media. Social media messages aim to interact with people through social networks and communities that give built-in incentives and individualised help in order to alter people's behavioural patterns and dramatically impact good behaviour for health outcomes (Sarkar et al., 2018). Organizations such as the CDC utilise social media to reinforce and personalise messages, reach new audiences, and establish a communication infrastructure based on open information sharing (CDC, 2015) and to give people access to reputable, science-based health information.

A scholar revealed that "most patients want substantial information to help inform their treatment decisions (Kandasamy et al., 2017, p. 3). These results highlight the need for providing patients with reliable information so they can acquire the knowledge and abilities needed to make decisions about screening and treatment. As communication grows more digitally driven, social media is becoming a tool for health communication. YouTube, Facebook and others are increasingly a common place to find films on prostate cancer (Anand et al. 2016).

According to Winnall's (2018) research, men with prostate cancer use various social media platforms to communicate with their spouses and relatives. This gives individuals the chance to interact and help one another without being constrained by distance. People exchange news, tips, and information about their experiences. They also encourage and support one another emotionally. According to the study, social media has enormous advocacy potential. Patients can become more informed about new therapies and concerns that impact them by exchanging information. Many voices may share their opinions on current issues and call for change because of how quickly information circulates on social media. Social media is being used by policymakers to gauge public opinion on medical issues. Because its material is public, Twitter is seen as an effective advocacy tool. Twitter is a rapid news source, and news organizations frequently use it to determine how the public feels about a story.

Loeb et al. (2018), social media is a vital resource for cancer prevention. They noted that microblogs might provide current information on cancer prevention, diagnosis, and therapy.

Influence of Social Media on Public Exposure and Knowledge of Prostate Cancer in Nigeria

A media campaign is usually a planned programme that may consist of several newspaper pieces, interviews on television or radio, or social media posts. Its purpose is to accomplish the campaign's declared objectives. This kind of aided marketing is likely to support facts or viewpoints about a product, service, or brand in general by using a media platform. Numerous social media health programmes have been in place for a while now with the specific goal of increasing awareness and improving cancer preventive practices. Prostate cancer awareness month is observed nationally every October, and during this time, more research is conducted on the causes, prevention, and treatments of the condition. The goal of this campaign is to support healthy lifestyle choices and assist people with prostate cancer. Media efforts that encourage men to discuss their own risks and seek care as soon as feasible might be very beneficial (Emeka-Ebere et al., 2022).

In January 2018, the Pew Research Centre stated that over 69% of individuals were using social networking sites. The most widely used social media site worldwide was YouTube, which was followed by Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. According to a Fox (2014) survey, around 75% of social media users talk about their health. Social media provides a "socially mediated conduit" for the dissemination of knowledge about health. According to Sarkar et al. (2018), they connect people with communities and social networks that offer vital incentives and tailored advice to induce behavioural changes. This is the reason why many organizations prefer to utilise social media to "reinforce and personalise messages, reach out to new audiences,

and develop an open data exchange-based communication foundation while simultaneously providing users with access to trustworthy, scientifically verified health information" (CDC, 2015). A number of other topics pertaining to awareness and understanding of prostate cancer have also been investigated by certain researchers. To find out the prevalence of prostate cancer awareness, for example, Ogundele and Ikuerowo (2015) did research. The researchers found that just 47 per cent of the sample knew about prostate cancer. 53% of the sample was found to be ignorant of prostate cancer. Likewise, the research of Sakala et al. (2020) examined knowledge and practice of prostate cancer prevention methods and found that only 29% of the sample reported having an adequate grasp of preventative and treatment procedures.

According to previous research by Akinremi et al. (2011); Ferlay et al. (2010), prostate cancer is responsible for 40,000 (13%) of all male cancer occurrences in Africa and 28,000 (11.3%) of all male cancer-related fatalities. Black men are more prone than men of other races to experience its incidence and prevalence, according to a number of studies (Adibe et al., 2017). Although the exact cause is unknown, late presentation is the main factor contributing to this population's higher death rate (Akinremi et al., 2011; Ojewola et al., 2017). Inadequate perceptions and knowledge of prostate cancer, together with the availability of alternative therapies, have been proposed as the causes of late presentation.

Low educational attainment, advanced age, and non-native English speakers were also shown to be strongly associated with a lack of knowledge of the illness (Deibert et al., 2007). Men in underdeveloped countries have not been screened more or presented earlier, despite a recent rise in awareness of prostatic disease. The relationship between increased usage of prostate cancer screening services and perceived or real understanding of the illness is not well understood (Ojewola et al., 2017). Nonetheless, Kanungo et al. (2015) discovered that a better attitude and behaviour toward obtaining medical treatment are often associated with a thorough awareness of an illness.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This work utilized survey design with the aid of online questionnaire (Google form) to reach a population of male population who are active on social media and living in Lagos Mainland at the time of this study. Going by data from the Lagos State Household Report, (2021), it shows that the male population make up 54% of Lagos State residents (Lagosstate.gov.ng, 2021). With this report in mind, World Population Review for 2023, shows that the population of the entire state stands at 17,200,000 (World Population Review, 2025). Therefore, to determine the male population, the researcher estimated 54% of the 2023 population of Lagos, which stands at 17,200,000. That is $0.54 \times 17,200,000 = 9,288,000$. So, the population for this study is 9,288,000. A sample size of 400 was realized using Taro Yamane formula. The respondents were purposively selected based on their knowledge of prostate cancer campaigns and possessing average idea about prostate cancer disease. Mainland was a randomly selected and the administration of questionnaire was through self-administration by applying the accidental technique which allows the researcher to survey respondents at will, the researcher targeted tertiary institutions, schools, churches and other public spaces within the location.

Instrumentation:

The questionnaire is online-based with the use of Google form. There are two major sections in the questionnaire; one for demographic data and the other for psychographic data. The 5-point Likert scale and the systematic differential scale were utilized. The instruction and questions were written in simple English. Based on the test retest results, to determine the internal consistency of the instrument using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), the reliability test yielded 0.94 (94%).

Method of Data Analysis:

The data were collected and interpreted using the descriptive analysis. And the data was reported under each of their unique variable. To ensure accurate and objective interpretation of data, sample tables, percentages, numbers and frequencies will be used to present and analyse

information in the study; the data collected will be first coded for simplicity and clarity and then grouped using statistical tools mentioned above.

RESULTS

Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire, only 359 were found usable, which represents 89.8% of the total. The analysis following the descriptive approach and the data was analysed using SPSS version twenty, and the results are presented in simple frequencies, percentages and means. In tables and charts.

RQ1: What is the level of audience exposure to social media messages on prostate cancer awareness campaign?

The survey asked if respondents have seen social media awareness messages on prostate cancer, the findings revealed that a greater percentage. In addition to this, a multiple-choice selection was used to determine the online platforms they commonly saw prostate cancer awareness messages. Instagram had 215 votes as the highest, followed by Facebook with 111, then WhatsApp Broadcast messages had 97, X with 85 and YouTube is least with only 5 respondents saying they have seen prostate awareness messages on it.

Table 1: Frequency of exposure to campaign on the media

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very frequent	175	50.0
Frequent	132	37.7
Sometime	30	8.6
Not frequent	8	2.3
Not at all	5	1.4
Total	350	100.0

From the table above, it was a clear indication that a sizeable percentage of the respondents agreed that Prostate cancer awareness on social media was constantly shared. This shows that social media gives adequate coverage for campaigns on prostate cancer with the aim of preventing and controlling disease in the country.

RQ2: To find out to what extent the social media was used in increasing audience knowledge on Prostate Cancer prevention?

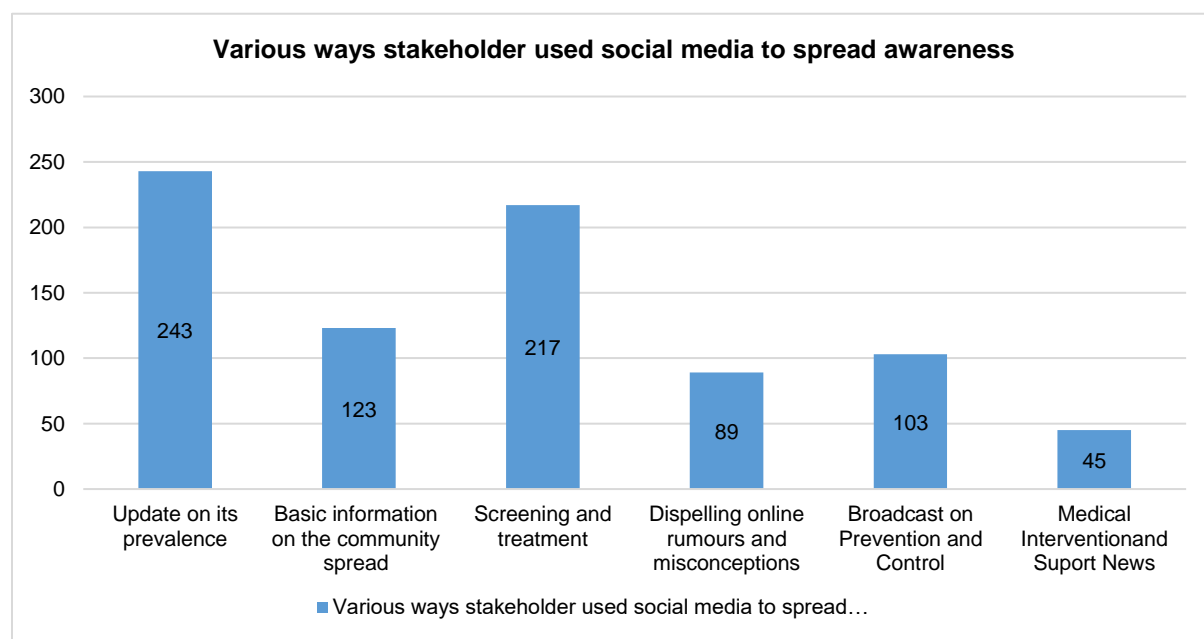
Table 2: How social media has been used to spread awareness

Item	Strongly agree F(%)	Agree F(%)	Undecided F(%)	Disagree F(%)	Strongly Disagree F(%)	Standard Mean	Deviation
Social media has been adequately used to promote prostate cancer	67 (18.7%)	159 (44.3%)	76 (21.2%)	42 (11.7%)	15 (4.1%)	3.62	1.04
Social media has increased the knowledge and prevention of prostate cancer	50 (13.9%)	168 (46.8%)	75 (20.9%)	54 (15.0%)	12 (3.4%)	3.52	1.02
You had adequate knowledge of Prostate cancer before you even encountered such messages on social media campaigns	94 (26.2%)	177 (49.3%)	22 (6.1%)	18 (5.0%)	48 (13.4%)	3.78	1.12

Everything I know about prostate cancer is due the social media campaigns	91 (25.3%)	182 (50.7%)	46 (12.8%)	19 (5.3%)	21 (5.9%)	3.54	0.95
Many youths know about prostate cancer because of social media	74 (20.6%)	146 (40.7%)	88 (24.5%)	29 (8.1%)	22 (6.1%)	3.46	1.02
Efforts to populate information about prostate cancer is common place on social media	98 (27.3%)	177 (49.3%)	56 (15.6%)	12 (3.3%)	16 (4.5%)	3.76	0.94
Average mean						3.62	0.13

The data above shows the various ways social media has been committed to popularize information about prostate cancer in Lagos State. The respondents indicated that social media has been adequately used to promote prostate cancer awareness in the state, this is affirmed with a mean score of 3.62. Also, to find out if these efforts have increased knowledge about the disease, the mean score of 3.52 shows that this has been done to a large extent. The study further asked if respondents had adequate knowledge of prostate cancer before the social media campaigns, and the majority indicated that they were helped by social media awareness campaigns, with a mean score of 3.78. In addition, the respondents confirmed that everything they now know about prostate cancer are as a result of the social media awareness campaigns, this again has a mean score of 3.54. to ask if youths have been mainly helped to know more about prostate cancer through social media awareness campaigns, the survey shows a mean score of 3.46. and lastly, the study asked if efforts to spread awareness about prostate cancer are common on social media, majority was satisfied, showing a mean score of 3.76.

RQ3: What are the various categories of messages stakeholders published on social media to spread awareness about prostate cancers?



Also, the study sought to find out the types of campaign messages on prostate cancer that the respondents were exposed to on social media, the chart indicated the majority of the respondents were exposed to screening and treatment of prostate cancer, while update on its prevalence ranked second; messages on spread of the disease was also seen, and at the same time, respondents saw online broadcasts about preventions, while some others saw messages on Interventions.

The survey probed further to ascertain how effective the messages encountered by respondents in influencing preventive actions and treatment. 304 of the sample indicated that the messages were effective in moving them to take some sort of action towards the prevention and treatment of prostate cancer.

DISCUSSION

In determining the level of audience exposure to social media campaign messages on prostate cancer awareness, the survey findings show that a greater percentage of the respondents got prostate cancer awareness campaign from various social media platforms. Also, it was discovered that a large percentage of respondents made use of social media to get health news and information about prostate cancer. This is similar to the results of Anand, et al study; they inferred that people now depend on social media for health information using a more interactive platform, social media (Anand, et al. 2013). Additionally, Bennett, (2011) revealed that Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and online forum have been prominently used in public health communication.

To answer how much knowledge on prostate cancer has been enhanced, a considerable number of respondents agreed that the campaigns they saw on social media increased their knowledge and provided more information about the virus. Many agreed that social media exposed them to a lot of information than they previously had. These findings describe the work of Sarkar et al. (2018) which confirms that raising awareness for prostate cancer on social media can be a powerful way to educate, support, and advocate for this important cause. In complete agreement with that CDC (2015) concluded that social media is used by organisations like the CDC to provide users with access to credible, science-based health information as well as to reinforce and personalise messages.

To determine the various categories of messages that respondents often encounter from various stakeholders in the public health sector spreading awareness about prostate cancer in Nigeria. The respondents affirmed various messaging ranging from, basic information about the disease, news on community spread, screening and treatments, dispelling online rumours or misconceptions and other vital messaging that can help to adequately conscientize the public on prostate cancer in Nigeria. Data from previous studies, Rideout & Fox, 2018 established has become a more realistic too to reach younger generation with public health messages. Similarly, Keelan, (2011) found out that social media platforms improve reach and promote campaign messages and organizations activities.

The results show that the bulk of the respondents agreed that social media has continued to play an important role in the prostate prevention and control in Nigeria, majority confirmed that the campaigns on social media on prostate cancer awareness have been very effective so far, thereby rating the effectiveness very high. This harmonize with the research work carried out by National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (2017) established that people trust social media to have a place in public health and was a valuable tool for: disseminating health information to the public; engaging the public and supporting action. Similarly, Keelan, (2011) found out that social media platforms improve reach and promote campaign messages and

organizations activities. In clear terms, the work of Loeb et al. (2018), confirmed that social media is a vital resource for cancer prevention

Conclusion

Prostate health is a crucial campaign in the contemporary age, and it has even become more important has experts have indicated that prevention lies in the early testing, detection and treatment of the disease. While many deaths were associated to low awareness and late detection previously, the digital age offers a quicker and speedy information transfer which has essentially prioritised the use of social media for the propagation and spread of useful information to the affected population. This study also reaffirms the need to use social media in public health and online medical and health interventions as it enhances use-to-user, or experts- to-users interaction; the idea of the online media intervention in public health communication is to bridge the information gap and encourage anonymised online programmes that can encourage the screening and treatment of prostate cancer among young people.

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