



SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCIENTIFIC DISSEMINATION OF PROPHYLACTIC MEASURES FOR THE CONTROL OF PARASITIC DISEASES

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Abstract

The advancement of communication technologies has made social media an integral part of everyday life, serving both as a platform for disseminating reliable information and for spreading opinions lacking a theoretical basis. The unsupervised and inappropriate use of social media in so-called scientific dissemination can hinder efforts to combat and control parasitic diseases, representing a setback in this field. Understanding how this topic is addressed online is crucial for ensuring high-quality scientific communication. This study analyzed how social media has been used either to enhance or to undermine knowledge about personal hygiene as a prophylactic measure against parasitic diseases. To achieve this, the term “personal hygiene” was searched on Instagram and TikTok, two of the largest social media platforms. The first 20 posts with a comedic nature—known for attracting more views—were selected. Among the analyzed videos and photos, only four had an educational approach supported by scientific evidence, either presented throughout the content or in the post caption. The remaining sixteen posts were purely playful, relying on common sense opinions rather than scientific accuracy. These posts either reinforced aesthetic standards of hygiene or served as entertainment aimed at gaining views and attracting potential customers for advertised products. Additionally, some posts addressed so-called “unhygienic” behaviors, yet they lacked reliable sources to explain why these behaviors were considered incorrect. The findings highlight the need for a more critical approach to using social media as a tool for disseminating information on preventive measures against parasitic diseases. Without proper evaluation, social media content may reinforce misleading behaviors that fail to contribute to health education and promotion.

Supported by: CNPq.

Keywords: parasite, communication, public health.

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