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## Journal of Communication

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Health Communication Revolution Through Content: Multi-Step Flow  
and More Spill Over of Communication

251 – 267

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## Health Communication Revolution Through Content: Multi-Step Flow and More Spill Over of Communication

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### ABSTRACT

*Health communication has undergone a revolution since the advent of social media, health content is no longer a tool for disseminating health information by medical or health personnel, but has become content that is easily produced by the general public. The purpose of this study is to uncover the implementation of the health revolution through Instagram content. Phenomenological research methods with content analysis, which is strengthened by data mining through Focus Group Discussions and interviews. The results showed that social media made health communication undergo a revolution. The communication process that is formed is a multi-step flow of communication (many stages), even the circulation of information forms a layer layer of stages in communication becomes irregular. This makes people experience more spill over of communication, which changes the culture of health communication in society.*

**Keywords :** *The revolution of health communication, content, information sharing, social media*

### ABSTRAK

Komunikasi kesehatan telah mengalami revolusi sejak hadirnya media sosial, konten kesehatan tidak lagi menjadi alat penyebaran informasi kesehatan oleh tenaga medis atau kesehatan, tapi sudah menjadi konten yang dengan mudah diproduksi oleh masyarakat umum. Tujuan penelitian ini mengungkap implementasi revolusi kesehatan melalui konten instagram. Metode penelitian fenomenologi dengan analisis konten, yang diperkuat dengan penggalian data melalui Focus Group Discussion dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial membuat komunikasi kesehatan mengalami revolusi. Proses komunikasi yang terbentuk adalah multi step flow of communication (banyak tahap), bahkan peredaran informasinya membentuk layer layer tahap dalam komunikasi menjadi tidak teratur. Hal ini membuat masyarakat mengalami more spill over of communication (peluberan informasi yang berlebihan), yang merubah budaya komunikasi kesehatan di masyarakat.

**Kata Kunci :** Revolusi komunikasi kesehatan, konten, peluberan informasi, media sosial

## INTRODUCTION

Health content that is scattered on instagram social media is a phenomenon that offers various revolutions in the civilization of human life. This research seeks to uncover the existence of a revolution as well as its implementation in the process of health communication

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through a content. The activity of sharing health content through Instagram is not only a need to meet information (Pennington, 2021), but the action is seen by researchers as an attempt to revolutionize conventional health communication processes.

The presence of technology and internet networks makes the communication process have evolved a lot (Lara & Bokoch, 2021), including health communication. Physical contact between health or medical personnel and service users or patients no longer has to occur. Even recently many health information phenomena are widely and freely shared only through content on social media (Yao & Ngai, 2022). This is what makes digital health communication seem to be an alternative to conventional health communication. In the end, a question arises whether health communication is undergoing a revolution, if so, how it is implemented. This in-depth research will reveal how a health communication can occur and undergo a revolution only through digital devices. Then who played a role in the revolution, as well as revealing the impact of the implementation of the health communication revolution.

The presence of the cyberspace era makes health communication activities easier just by utilizing social media. In the conventional era, health communication can only be done by meeting and interacting physically (Massey et al., 2021), however, since the arrival of the cyberspace era, health communication can be done through social media (Yang & Huang, 2021). Health communication according to Healty People 2010, is defined as the art of disseminating information, persuading, as well as providing motivation individually or in groups related to issues about health to improve the quality of life and health (Yuen, 2022). In fact, according to Cline, health communication is seen as an area of theory, research, and practice related to health (Ludes, 2021). Based on previous studies by researchers, researchers believe that communication through the media offers changes that have an impact on the flow of health communication in society.

Health communication has similarities with communication in general. There must be a communication component as Laswell suggests such as the presence of communicators, communicants, messages, media, and effects (X. Zhao, 2020). The health communication component has its own peculiarities when compared to communication in general. In the components of messages, effects, and media are considered to have similarities with communication in general (Pachucki et al., 2022). This research presents its own uniqueness, where researchers examine health communication through media produced by the general public who do not have an educational background in the field of health or the like.

Messages in health communication include information related to the world of health or improving the quality of life such as information on infectious diseases, education on new

viruses, to appeals related to bacteria and so on (Yang & Huang, 2021). Meanwhile, the effect in health communication includes benchmarks for the delivery of information conveyed, it can be in the form of a response in the form of action or just understanding (Eismann et al., 2021). Meanwhile, media in health communication is a channel used in the communication process. The development of existing health communication has undergone refraction, various aspects of health its content is easily produced freely.

The practical purpose of health communication includes increasing knowledge about health and quality of life (Pergamon & Systems, 2013), develop the ability and skills in conducting health communication effectively, to form attitudes and behaviors in the health communication process (Phillips & Wisniewski, 2021). In conventional health communication, strategic and practical goals can only be achieved if the components in communication meet physically, but since the presence of communication technology through social media has become an option and even a lifestyle in meeting the needs of information about health (Shellanabilla et al., 2022).

The presence of social media in health communication is very likely that there should not be a physical meeting between the communicator and the communicant (Ghai et al., 2022). This picture certainly proves that various activities are easily carried out on social media, especially social media on an ongoing development that makes it easier for users (Shellanabilla et al., 2022); (Pergamon & Systems, 2013).

Communication through social media seems to be a basic need of the community, and has even become an opium. Actually, there has been a lot of research on social media, it's just that many studies have focused on the impact of using the media itself. Whereas if deepening is carried out, social media has an important role in human life, transparency becomes the keyword for communication through social media (Brandon, 2021). Various human activities are easily known throughout the world only through media such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and so on.

The study of social media that has an impact on personality has been studied by Erik Qualman in *Socialnomics How Social Media Transforms The Way We Live and Do Business* (2010) (Lee & Way, 2021). however, the study is considered unable to dismantle the impact of media in personality changes on a person's communication patterns. This is the strong basis for researchers to study more deeply the study of erik qualman through the perspective of health communication. Researchers also related to the Lee and Way study which revealed that content shared by someone on social media can greatly interfere with a person's personality (Lee & Way, 2021).

Lefebvre has actually also revealed that social media has a big impact on the lifestyle of even human civilization itself, especially in communication activities (Lefebvre et al., 2020). In health communication, for example, in the conventional era a dokter or medical personnel only shared information about health when they were handling or facing patients, while in the digital era, health information is shared through social media in the form of content (Cascini et al., 2022). This phenomenon has become evidence that doctors or other medical personnel already have Braggadocian behavior. Only a small number of doctors or health workers have preventative behavior. Even researchers believe that these behaviors have an impact on the revolution of the health communication process.

Social media not only facilitates communication activities, more than that social media is able to turn off Social schizophrenia. Social schizophrenia is a person's behavior that changes according to the setting of the place where he is (Cascini et al., 2022). In the context of health communication, Social media is able to frame a person's behavior so that what is displayed on social media is required to be the same as his behavior in the real world (O'Connor et al., 2022). This certainly forces a dokter to provide the same services as shown on social media. Like a double-edged knife, Social schizophrenia on the one hand is able to increase reputation, on the other hand it can have an impact on a person's indifference in the real world.

The number of social users that exceed its population is proof that social media imperialism has shifted from developed to developing countries (Shellanabilla et al., 2022). This perspective has an impact on the behavior of doctors in carrying out health communication. The use of social media is considered to be able to shift conventional health communication. In Indonesia, almost 87% of doctors already have diverse social media accounts, ranging from Instagram, Facebook, to TikTok (Shellanabilla et al., 2022).

Instagram is the most popular social media in conducting health communication by doctors with a percentage of users of 67% from other social media (Yao & Ngai, 2022). This fact reinforces that health communication has been done a lot through Instagram. Another interesting fact is, new doctors who do not have high flying hours are actually more famous on social media. It is certainly very worrying that health content is easily produced and consumed by the wider community without having to come to a clinic or hospital. In fact, health communication should be better done by making various observations first (Cleofas, 2022).

In the millennial generation in Indonesia, it shows an interesting fact, almost 51% of millennials who are sick and considered mildly ill tend not to consult a doctor and only use content on social media to get drugs or therapy (Shellanabilla et al., 2022). It is this fact that



further strengthens that health communication has undergone a revolution. Based on the facts above, researchers are trying to uncover how the implementation of the health communication revolution.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research makes the use of social media in carrying out health communication activities as the object of research. This type of qualitative research with phenomenological research methods is chosen by researchers to get more in-depth results with the content analysis process. Data mining method through Focus Group Discussion (FGD), interviews as well as literature. Health content on social media is selectively selected by researchers for operational data mining aimed at obtaining data on health content that contributes to the health communication revolution.

The collected data will be continued through content analysis. the ocus Group Discussion (FGD) involved about 5 key informants and 15 additional informants. Furthermore, the data will also go through a data triangulation process and validity test using qualitative data processing software. Researchers also place restrictions on data mining by choosing the object of research doctors who are in the millennial category with a number of followers of more than a thousand followers and actively sharing health content. As for the patient category, it was chosen from users who were willing to respond to health content and who reshared health content on their social media accounts.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Health Content and Changes in Communication Activities**

Health communication through social media presents a change in communication activities. This has already happened since 2019 has become increasingly uncontrollable (Ghai et al., 2022). Being wise in using social media seems to be a necessity, otherwise communication activities are the most affected. Communication activities become easier only through digital spaces or better known as virtual spaces (Buschhardt et al., 2021). Previous research revealed that communication has changed since the existence of social media (Brandon, 2021). The changes that have occurred in almost all aspects of communication, both marketing communication (Lim & Rasul, 2022), tourism communication, to health communication.

Communication activities can occur only through content, including health communication activities (Phillips & Wisniewski, 2021). Doctor and professor at one of the state universities

in Indonesia who actively shares health content on Instagram with the initials "A" stated that since the existence of social media, he and his colleagues have used social media to carry out health communication activities. (Toth-Manikowski et al., 2022). Social media even plays an important role in communication activities (Shellanabilla et al., 2022), convenience is certainly offered, but there have been some changes in communication activities. The changes that occurred include ; (a) changes in the form of communication, usually health consultations can only be done face-to-face or physical contact, with the presence of media such activities can be carried out through medi with various convenience features available. (b) changes in attitudes, the speed of dissemination of information on social media have an impact on a person's behavior. (c) changing needs, health communication through the media which was originally only as a supporting need instead turned into a primary need (Hu & Yu, 2021), various health consultation activities can be carried out through the media. (d) changes in activity, communication between doctors and patients that can take a long time with the current queuing system starting to be abandoned by many millennials, they tend to prefer virtual consultations with doctors rather than having to do in-person consultations (Buschhardt et al., 2021).

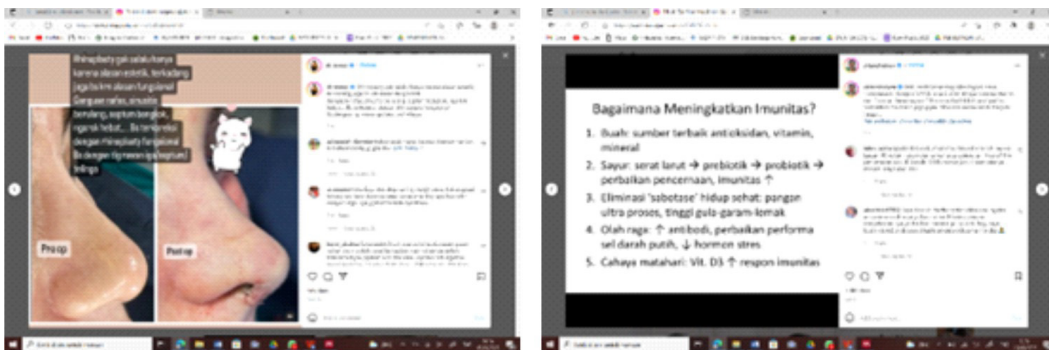
The presence of media in the communication process is basically to facilitate the delivery of a message (Brandon, 2021), but practically the media actually provides changes in the communication process. In health communication, the media is precisely as an important part and must be present in every health communication process, starting from the initial consultation, detection, to the delivery of a diagnosis, everything is done easily through social media. Even on Instagram, there is a lot of health content that is deliberately shared free of charge by doctors to the wider community as part of health education (Xu & Taghizadeh Larsson, 2021).

Health communication between doctors and patients, which should only be a form of personal communication (Muniem Abdel Fattah et al., 2022) has been transformed into group communication to mass communication. This is due to the existence of features that offer convenience in carrying out communication activities. The importance of the role of the media even determines how humans communicate (Pergamon & Systems, 2013), as well as showing changes in communication activities. Only by utilizing the senses and in the absence of physical contact makes health communication remain effective only through social media.

The statement of doctor "A" regarding changes in communication activities in the health sector is justified by doctors and lecturers at East Java with the initials "S". Doctor "S" stated that the ease of communicating through the media makes doctors not have to have

physical contact with patients, especially in diagnosis or treatment. As is the case with millennial generation patients, they tend to choose consultations through the media with effective feedback. Doctor “S” also stated that many doctors have experienced braggadocian behavior which is characterized by the activeness of doctors in campaigning for health content through social media accounts. Not only aiming for education (Roche et al., 2020), researchers assessed that the activity of sharing health content is considered an effort to invite colleagues to start using social media in carrying out health communication activities.

The media not only changes communication activities, but also forms a circle of communication layer. the circle of communication or circle of communication was actually introduced first by Nurudin (2019) (Shellanabilla et al., 2022). Nurudin stated that communication through social media is heterogeneous and forms a wide circle communication pattern (Shellanabilla et al., 2022). But researchers believe with the proliferation of social media, communication circles have shifted into stacked or layered communication circles. This is evidenced by the large amount of information shared on social media which is then re-shared to create a repetition of similar information. Health communication for example, when doctors share health content on social media, his followers tend to attempt to reshare content by “tagging” the doctor’s social media accounts. Of course, communication activities like this will not be found in conventional health communication.



**Image 1. Health Content with Circulation Features “tags”**

Changes in communication activities are not new, in the field of marketing has undergone changes first (Gartner et al., 2021). Buying and selling transactions, which initially required the meeting of sellers and buyers, have shifted since the existence of the media (Ghai et al., 2022). Only through communication in the virtual space, buyers can buy and even develop their business with a partnership or network system (Buschhardt et al., 2021). Meanwhile, in health communication, changes in communication activities not only facilitate

communication between doctors and patients (Rifkin & Lazris, 2015). But it is also used to expand the network between doctors, researchers, or other health workers. In the end, health communication that initially occurred one way actually became many directions and many interests.

Yang Fan and Zili Huang in their study of the social media revolution stated that the media revolution will occur very quickly (Yang & Huang, 2021), if responded positively, it will have a positive impact, but if it is responded negatively, the impact will also be negative. Based on the results of an interview with one of the patients who actively consulted through social media with his doctor, it was stated that the positive impact was the ease and speed in meeting health information needs. While the negative impact is the emergence of a sense of dependence. When a patient is satisfied with a consultation on social media, he will continue and tend to choose the same doctor, but if he feels satisfied, he tends to switch to another doctor. Social media is considered capable of framing the character of doctors only through a piece of content (Fraccastoro et al., 2021).

The activeness of doctors in producing content does not always have a positive meaning. Cleofas states that people who tend to actively produce content usually have a lot of abandoned work (Cleofas, 2022). The statement was justified by doctor "A" that many doctors are active on social media rather than active in carrying out their duties in clinics or hospitals. There are not even a few doctors who do not have clinics but are well-known and exist on social media. Of course this is a pathology that shows that with the existence of social media, the consultation room does not have to be in a hospital, clinic, or operating table, only through content and digital devices health communication easily occurs and it is responded well by the wider community (Eismann et al., 2021). This impropriety seems to have become natural as a result of the development of social media and changes in communication activities.

Researchers confirmed on one of the doctors who was active on social media with thousands of followers but had no practice with the initials "T". Doctor "T" stated that instead of me being considered behind and having no place to practice, it was much better than me not existing and sharing my knowledge on social media. This fact is very surprising and it turns out that Zhao Lei with a social media impact study stated also that people prefer virtual spaces over conventional spaces (L. Zhao, 2021). Social media has not only changed the way of communicating but also became an important part of modern society's life (Muniem Abdel Fattah et al., 2022). The future is very likely that the activity of health communication will continue to undergo evolution and revolution on an ongoing basis.

Changes in health communication activities through social media have the following consequences (Harrington, 2014); (a) changes in the social relationship between doctors and patients, (b) the formation of a wide information loop between people who control social media and those who do not, (c) the erosion of information that is private, (d) people who are active on social media tend to have poor social relationships, (e) the ease of inappropriate but scattered health information on social media. Despite the many consequences of health communication through social media, 67% of millennials prefer to consult a doctor through social media (Ye et al., 2022). Even doctors with millennial age also prefer virtual health communication activities instead of having to serve patients in hospitals or clinics (X. Zhao, 2020).

The proliferation of health communication through social media is able to form communication technological animals, namely communication activities through social media have become fundamental for modern society. The density of activities is the reason why health communication is easier to do through social media (Pekkala & van Zoonen, 2022). This needs to be watched out for when communication technological animals occur in the midst of society, the information available is not necessarily swallowed as a whole. The amount of information on social media about health that has not been proven to be true (Gartner et al., 2021). As a mainstream media, social media is very natural if it is analogous to a media labeled as garbage (Ludes, 2021). Anyone can easily produce and consume information in the form of content without prior truth testing (Grey et al., 2022).

Health content on social media not only changes communication activities, but also changes the way they communicate (Ali Homaid, 2022). From the data analysis carried out by the researcher, it is known that there are changes in the way of communicating, including; (a) a change in the flow of information circulation, from the communication that was supposed to be the case between the doctor and the patient turned into a stacked communication with several reps. (b) the content of the information, health communication carried out through the medium of its contents is only an outline, the doctor still pays attention to the information that must be conveyed directly with information that can be conveyed only face-to-face (Jenicek, 2014). For example, in the delivery of a diagnosis of severe disease, the doctor still requires the patient to come and the delivery is carried out in person. (c) the nature of information, in health communication carried out through the media, the doctor has an important role to sort out the level of patient privacy to medical information that is not suitable for general consumption (Lara & Bokoch, 2021). (d) the effect of communication, even though health communication is easily carried out through social media. Doctors and patients must understand each other's effects of communication activities carried out

(Hogeveen & Lam, 2011). This is an effort to avoid leaking important information or information whose truth cannot be proven.

Basically content is information circulating through social media (Merminod & Benaroyo, 2022). The circulation of health information in social media in its development is no longer a one-step flow of communication (one-way communication) (Massey et al., 2021), or two step flow of communication (two-way) as Nurudin suggests. Health communication that is increasingly intensively carried out through social media forms a multi-step flow of communication (many stages), even the circulation of information forms a layer of stages in communication becomes irregular. One-way communication occurs only from the communicator to the communicant. Whereas in two-way communication or many stages of communicants do not always act as communicants, it can be that communicants become communicators or vice versa.

Communication activities have indeed undergone many changes in line with the continued development of technology and networks (Buschhardt et al., 2021). The role of the elements of communication becomes increasingly biased, the exchange of roles in the elements of communication seems to be reasonable. Society no longer makes effectiveness the only success rate in communicating (Xu & Taghizadeh Larsson, 2021). Intercation is precisely the main goal in communication through social media. If interactive can be achieved through communication on social media, then the effectiveness of communication is believed to be achieved optimally.

### **Social Media in the Health Communication Revolution: Social Engineering Tools and Its Future**

Social media does not only change communication activities both individually and in groups (X. Zhao, 2020). Health communication is no longer limited to distance, space, time and circumstances (Yang & Huang, 2021). This condition makes the perpetrators of health communication in this case between doctors and patients also experience changes in culture and social behavior (Prasad et al., 2014). A doctor who is supposed to practice in a clinic or hospital actually spends more time practicing on social media or digital applications. The predictions of previous researchers stated that there would be a wave of power coming from the community (Yuen, 2022), but in reality the surge of power is happening very quickly and getting out of control. Social media is incarnate as a social engineering tool that can be easily utilized to carry out health communication.

People use social media not only for consultation in the form of health communication, but also to use it to express various things experienced when health communication takes place (Cotterill, 2022). Social media seems to be an important tool to dismantle various cases or problems that arise in health communication, for example in the form of practices or harassment. Social media is also a forum to account for deviant actions that occur during health communication. (Garcia-Retamero & Galesic, 2013). For example, when there is an act of lack of comfort, then social media is considered a media that is able to restore a good name in front of the general public without having to make a conventional apology.

Social media has become a social engineering tool that makes life easier (Roche et al., 2020), but on the other hand social media is also a detrimental social engineering tool (Phillips & Wisniewski, 2021). The activeness of the community in using social media to deliver social media as an extension of the community in solving various problems that arise in health communication (Merminod & Benaroyo, 2022). Unlike the era before the existence of social media. Various cases in health communication can only be followed up by people who have economic ability, while people with low economies tend to choose silence and do not resist. This is where the bright side of social media is that economic inequality is not a problem to follow up on cases in health communication.

The development of social media has almost made all the information that people need exist in various forms and models. All informants in the study stated that social media plays an important role in changing the communication process, in the future changes will continue to occur on an ongoing basis, and will even continue to undergo transformation. Brandon stated that in the future social media that continues to undergo changes due to human nature that gets bored quickly and a high desire to explore (Brandon, 2021). The insatiable nature is also a supporting factor in accelerating changes in the communication process (Cotterill, 2022). The revolution of the communication process is actually only a victim of discontent and the high need for human beings to communicate. This is the basis for the continued development of features on social media.

The health communication revolution is believed by researchers to continue to occur. The high activity balanced with the sophistication of social media makes health communication in the future no longer occur only in hospitals or clinics. Even a clinic or hospital will only be a building where medical actions are performed. Meanwhile, the communication process is only carried out through social media. The development of social media in its involvement in health communication will be more convenient and satisfying (Gartner et al., 2021). The ease and speed of access makes people tend to choose social

communication through social media (O'Connor et al., 2022), because social media is already considered a "new world" that always presents interesting things for its inhabitants.

The high need for information about health is predicted to continue to increase (Xu & Taghizadeh Larsson, 2021). The increasingly unhealthy diet of modern society makes human demands for maintaining health even higher (Ye et al., 2022). This is what makes the need for information about health even higher. Social media with a variety of information in it seems to be a solution to meet the high need for information about health (Ghai et al., 2022). The future of social media in health communication seems to be clearly predictable including; (a) the source of health information becomes very random, everyone can easily create information about health. (b) the high dependence of humans on social media makes communication activities more attractive to the public than having to go to a clinic or hospital just to consult a doctor.

Another thing on social media that will undergo changes, especially in the process of health communication, is the content format of social media itself. The format of media content in health communication is currently only in the form of text, images, video (Roche et al., 2020), in the future the content format can be in the form of stickers, animations or even in the form of virtual reality. Human sophistication and creativity in stripping social media will always be balanced with the evolution and revolution of the communication process.

The dissemination of health information through content is very massive to bring the public in a condition of more spill over of communication (excessive information submergence) which is able to change people's mindsets and beliefs in consuming information. This research also emphasizes that if face-to-face communication between doctors and patients remains intensive, it is necessary to have construction and even new reconstruction. This is because the various conveniences and comforts of social media communication are very capable of eroding the culture of the community in communication activities between doctors and patients.

## **CONCLUSION**

Health communication through social media has offered a communication revolution. Health communication that initially could only be done between medical personnel and patients no longer has to happen, even the general public who do not have knowledge in the health sector easily produce and spread health content through social media. This is what causes the submergence of information. The health content shared by the authorities is



reproduced by the general public which creates a communication pattern that has many stages or can be called a multi-step flow of communication. Social media is no longer a supporting medium in overseeing health communication between doctors and patients, seeing its development, social media is like an online doctor who provides health information services without time and knowledge restrictions.

The future with the dependence on the use of social media in the aspect of communication certainly offers media as a social engineering tool. So that the study in the next research is to focus more on the impact of content in changing patterns of human civilization in the future. Because in the future, humans will increasingly have a very minimal social spirit, the media only seems to offer false social sensitivity.

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