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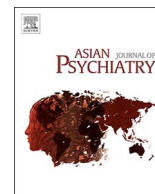
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Letter to the editor

A YouTube video intervention as mHealth to promote first-episode psychosis education to Chinese



Delayed treatment to first-episode psychosis is associated with poorer cognitive and clinical outcomes (Chang et al., 2013). Previous studies have shown that reduction of duration of untreated psychosis is a key step for improving the outcomes of first-episode psychosis (Chang et al., 2013; Fusar-Poli et al., 2017). Major contributors to treatment delay include the initial decision to seek care and lack of resources to make this informed decision. YouTube health education videos provide a new paradigm in disseminating psychoeducation (Lam et al., 2017; Lam and Woo, 2018; Woo and Chung, 2018; Zheng et al., 2016). While the internet may be a source of health information for Chinese, the quality of online mental health information was lower in Chinese than in English (Tsiang and Woo, 2017). Therefore, we evaluated the performance of YouTube in targeting Chinese-speaking individuals who are in the high risk age group (e.g. aged 34 and below) of developing first-episode psychosis or schizophrenia.

A board-certified psychiatrist was invited by a Chinese television station for a health talk show in Cantonese, which covered topics centered on early psychosis intervention. The real-time recording was then uploaded to YouTube as a 25-min video in a YouTube channel. The sample of this study included viewers who have watched the video during the first 10-month period. Using YouTube Analytics, the recorded parameters included number of viewers, watch time, average view duration, number of likes and shares, traffic source, and age and gender of viewers.

Between February 2017 and December 2017, there were an average of 11.7 viewers per day. The YouTube video recorded a total watch time of 19212 min from 3529 viewers. Approximately 47% of our viewers were men and 53% were women. There were 14 likes and 67 shares. Average view duration was 5.4 (22%) minutes. In terms of traffic source, suggested videos on YouTube accounted for 1878 views (53%) and YouTube search accounted for 669 views (19%). Most people viewed the contents using wireless devices, including mobile phones (63%, $n = 2236$) and tablets (12%, $n = 432$).

Among the 3529 viewers, 47% (1659) were 34 years old or younger, 19% (671) were between 35 and 44 years old, 17% (599) were between 45 and 54 years old, and 17% (600) were 55 years old or older. In terms of total watch time, the high risk age group of developing first-episode psychosis or schizophrenia accounted for 42% (8069) minutes watched.

YouTube as an e-mental health platform has a huge potential to disseminate mental health education for the Chinese-speaking population (Zheng and Woo, 2017). Our results indicate a high utilization of YouTube video for first-episode psychosis. There were approximately 350 viewers per month. This is higher than an average of 26 views per video per month reported in a recent study on 22 health education videos (Garside et al., 2016). Also, the average view duration of this video (22%) is considerably higher than the average view duration (17%) reported in a recent study (Lam et al., 2017). To increase recognition and awareness of first-episode psychosis in the Chinese-speaking communities, future YouTube video development should focus on investing extra attention to the first five minutes to captivate the audience.

Approximately 47% of the viewers were Chinese-speaking individuals who were in the high risk age group of developing first-episode psychosis or schizophrenia. This is consistent with previous studies showing YouTube as a platform has a huge potential in assisting healthcare professionals to deliver psychoeducation to the targeted age groups (Lam and Woo, 2018; Woo, 2017). There were 67 shares, and 75% viewers used wireless devices. Our results suggest that further utilizing social media to share and optimizing future health videos for mobile devices may be necessary to reduce mental health disparities in the Chinese-speaking communities. Connecting the Chinese-speaking general public to mHealth will improve education and awareness of early psychosis intervention.

Conflict of interest

None.

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