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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Utility of YouTube in disseminating dementia knowledge to Chinese Canadians

To the Editor

Data have shown that the Asian community in North America may dismiss pathological decline due to dementia as a natural, unavoidable part of aging.¹ For foreign-born Chinese Canadians, the internet may be an important source of health information. Culturally tailored resources is necessary to promote knowledge delivery to the fast-growing Chinese immigrant population in North America.²⁻⁴

Despite YouTube's usefulness in delivering dementia knowledge to Chinese Americans,⁵ one major concern is its ability to target older Chinese users who may be less familiar with the internet as a source of health information.⁵ This study aims to examine the performance of YouTube in targeting Canadian Chinese-speaking individuals who are in the high risk age group (eg, aged 55 and above) for developing dementia.

A board-certified psychiatrist was invited by a North American Chinese television station for 2 educational talks in Cantonese on dementia. The recording was then uploaded to YouTube as two 25-minute videos on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/kpwoo>). The sample of this study included viewers from Canada who have watched the videos during a 3-year period. Because the videos were conducted entirely in Cantonese and video data were restricted to only viewers from Canada, we speculated that most of our viewers would be residents in Canada who were fluent in Cantonese. Using YouTube Analytics, parameters such as number of views, age and gender of viewers, watch time, average view duration, traffic sources, and device types were recorded. Results were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Between January 2014 and January 2017, the YouTube videos recorded 584 views, with 321 (55.0%) female and 263 (45.0%) male viewers. The videos had a total watch time of 5650 minutes and an average view duration of 9.67 minutes (38.7% of total video length). Top 3 traffic sources included (1) suggested videos on YouTube (60.1%, $n = 351$), (2) YouTube search (12.3%, $n = 72$), and (3) browse features (11.1%, $n = 65$). A majority of people viewed the contents using tablets (39.6%, $n = 231$), followed by mobile phones (31.5%, $n = 184$) and computers (28.9%, $n = 169$).

The targeted age group of 55 and older made up 53.9% ($n = 315$) of the total views for the dementia videos and watched 52.0% (2938 minutes) of the total watch time.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of health promotion to outreach foreign-born Chinese in North America.² However, there is little knowledge about the performance of social media

in educating ethnic minorities about dementia. Our study analyzed the performance of 2 dementia-related educational videos on YouTube in providing education to Chinese-speaking individuals residing in Canada. Our results demonstrate high usage of wireless devices to view content, suggesting that further research is necessary regarding dissemination of health information via mobile and wireless devices would be necessary to improve dementia health outcomes for Chinese-speaking Canadians.

The YouTube videos were able to reach the age group of 55 and above. This group accounted for about half of the views and total watch times of the dementia education videos. These results suggest that YouTube is an attractive format for disseminating dementia-related education to the older Chinese immigrant population residing in Canada. As the most common traffic source was through the suggested videos provided by YouTube, future studies should further examine this YouTube function to provide culturally tailored resources for the older Chinese-speaking individuals residing in Canada.

In conclusion, YouTube could be a significant outreach tool for caregivers and individuals who may be interested in further dementia information and are barred by cultural and language barriers. YouTube has huge potential to deliver quality dementia and other health care knowledge.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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