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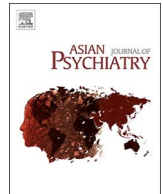
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Letter to the Editor

Exploring the role of YouTube in delivering dementia education to older Chinese



Previous studies have shown that Asian American community may dismiss pathological decline of dementia as regular and natural part of aging that is unavoidable (Diamond and Woo, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2016; Woo, 2013). In comparison of online dementia information in Chinese and in English languages, e-health for dementia in Chinese language was at a lower quality (Tsiang and Woo, 2017). Culturally tailored resources would be necessary to promote delivery knowledge and to reduce stigma towards mental illnesses (Lam et al., 2017; Woo and Mehta, 2017; Zheng and Woo, 2016). For example, a study showed that culturally tailored short films have a promising impact in modifying misconceptions about dementia among Chinese Americans (Zheng et al., 2016).

YouTube has become one of the world's most popular social media, attracting over one billion unique users every month. Social media provides many advantages in delivering knowledge, such as lowered cost, convenience, and global outreach. In terms of public health, YouTube can be used to promote broader public health campaigns to the general public (Woo, 2017). However, one major concern about dementia education via YouTube is its ability to target older Chinese who may be less familiar with seeking online information (Zheng and Woo, 2017). This study examines the performance of YouTube in targeting Chinese-speaking individuals who are in the high risk age group (e.g. aged 55 and above) of developing dementia.

A board-certified psychiatrist was invited by a North American Chinese television station for two educational talk shows in Cantonese, which covered topics centered on dementia background, management, and prevention. The real-time recording was then uploaded to YouTube as two 25-min videos. The sample of this study included viewers who have watched the videos during the first 2-year period. The recorded parameters included age and gender of viewers, number of views, watch time, and average view duration. Year 1 (January 2014–January 2015) and Year 2 (January 2015–January 2016) data were dichotomized on various parameters, and the categorical variable of age was analyzed using chi-square test.

Between January 2014 and January 2016, the YouTube videos recorded 4333 views, with 2213 (51.1%) female and 2120 (48.9%) male viewers. The videos had a total watch time of 26,554 min, and an average view duration of 6.13 min. The videos in their Year 2 period had a better performance compared to their Year 1 period in terms of the following parameters: (1) longer total watch time (17,872 vs. 8682 min); and (2) more number of viewers (2998 vs 1335).

In comparison to Year 1, YouTube as a platform was improving in Year 2 in reaching out to the targeted age group of viewers aged 55 and above (53.0% vs. 46.1%, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 17.39$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, YouTube was better at targeting older adults (age older than 65 years) in Year 2 than Year 1 (14.0% vs. 10.0%, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 13.07$, $p < 0.01$).

For the Chinese-speaking population, YouTube as an e-mental health platform has huge potential. Both the number of viewers and total watch time doubled from Year 1 to Year 2. Contrary to previous study (Zheng and Woo, 2017), our study showed that YouTube as a platform was able to adapt to improve on delivering dementia education to targeted age group. As dementia is a geriatric condition with onset later in an individual's life, YouTube will continue to gain prominence in both the education and care of older patients with dementia, along with providing psychoeducation support for their caregivers.

Further research is warranted to determine the importance of using e-mental health for outreach. Particularly for older adults with financial, language, and cultural barriers to traditional care, further research regarding e-mental health use patterns and other related issues (e.g. effectiveness) is needed. With more than 1 billion YouTube users every month, understanding the role of using such cost-effective, readily available, and widely distributed media for prevention and psychoeducation efforts is timely and necessary. Social media will continue to generate digital data at an exponential rate. Utilizing artificial intelligence and machine learning, YouTube as a platform has a huge potential in assisting healthcare professionals to deliver quality healthcare and psychoeducation to the targeted age group.

Declaration of interest

None.

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