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## The use of Social Media by Health Care Workers in Basra Governorate/Iraq

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### Abstract

This study's goal was to assess how healthcare workers use social media for educational objectives in Basra Governorate. The study used a cross-sectional design that involved healthcare workers in Al-Qurnah hospital. The study was achieved, and the data were collected during interviews with participants. The results were analyzed using (SPSSs), employing simple statistical procedures, and the findings are displayed in tables with mean scores and percentages in relation to the whole number of registrants. More than half of the participants (52.5%) were 21-30 years old, and the gender was 44% males and 56% females, and the highest percentage is 46.5% for the diploma. A series of social media platforms were utilized by the participants: in descending order for educational objectives: YouTube, Facebook, Snap Chat, Telegram, Instagram, and Twitter. YouTube has a mean score of 3.19, while we note that the lowest platform had an impact on the professional development of healthcare workers, with a mean score of 2.08 for Twitter. The most widely used social networking site (29%) of health workers is Facebook. 50% of participants spend more than three hours every day on social media networks, and 51.5% use these networks for professional networking purposes. The importance of using social networking sites for health workers. We find that it is very useful (75%) in improving critical skills and not helpful in improving professional decision making (65%). According to the findings, social media may be helpful for healthcare professionals for the purpose of increasing medical professional development and keeping up with the latest medical developments and discoveries.

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### 1. Introduction

Social media (SM) is defined as "A collection of internet-powered applications that expand upon the conceptual and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and facilitate the creation and dissemination of content generated by users" <sup>[1]</sup>. Social networking sites (SNSs) are online platforms that let users create profiles and link with other users to form a network <sup>[2]</sup>. Social media has influenced both professional and interpersonal communication, especially between a younger generation of patients and healthcare providers who grew up in the digital era. Social media platforms provide a distinct range of prospects in the healthcare industry; yet, these novel chances are accompanied by several possible obstacles <sup>[3]</sup>. Social media platforms include, among others, blogs, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook <sup>[4]</sup>.

There are several ways that social media might be utilized in the health field, such as facilitating patient and physician access to educational materials, producing reference resources with plenty of content (like Wikipedia), assessing and reporting on current flu trends, encouraging public health campaigns, and enrolling patients in clinical trials and online studies <sup>[5]</sup>.

Numerous social media technologies are available to healthcare professionals, including blogs, wikis, microblogs, media-sharing websites, social networking sites, virtual reality, and gaming settings. These resources can help advance patient care, patient awareness, organizational promotion, efforts to promote public health [6]. Medical professionals like to utilize social media platforms that allow them to engage in online forums, connect with peers about patient concerns, and listen to experts [7]. In order to increase their market share, increase profits, or further their goals related to health and healthcare, hospitals may use social media tactics. Public perception of hospitals and their capacity to draw in patients may be enhanced by having a strong social media presence. According to patient perceptions, hospitals with a high social media presence are more likely to provide advanced medical care and innovative technologies [8]. A versatile tool, social media makes user interaction possible and acts as a medium for social engagement for a diverse range of people. Social media may be a helpful resource for health communication, but there are drawbacks as well. First, the information shared must be carefully reviewed for accuracy, and users' privacy and confidentiality must be protected [9].

In particular, SM is quickly evolving as a support means of healthcare industry by facilitating information gathering and sharing, fostering professional connections, and fostering discussions with patients about health, coworkers, and the general public. Also, SM gives patients more power by educating and empowering them to take responsibility for their own health care [10].

"Infodemic" is a phrase used to describe the massive volume of information that is shared during a disease outbreak using digital and non-digital media. It contains both reliable scientific data and deceptive, false narratives disseminated via a range of conventional and unconventional communication channels, such as SMPs [11]. The COVID-19 pandemic is an illustration of the widespread dissemination of false and misleading information using SMPs during the pandemic, which led to the creation of an infodemic [12]. The most potential applications of social media in medicine include how to improve patient communication, advance professional growth, and support public health studies and services [13].

So this study's goal was to assess the social media among health care workers in Al-Qurnah hospital. This study's goal was to assess social media for educational objectives (education and development of professionals, Health improvement, improving creativity, improving problem-solving skills, etc.) among healthcare workers in Al-Qurnah hospital/ Basra Governorate/ Iraq.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Study design, settings and participants

A cross-sectional design study was conducted by utilizing a questionnaire to find out what the healthcare workers thought about using social media as a device of education and to determine whether social media could be a useful instrument for enhancing the training of health staff at Al-Qurnah Hospital in the southern of Iraq/ Basra Governorate. 200 health care workers took part in study engaged in Al-Qurnah

hospital in Basra Governorate.

### 2.2. Design and description of the questionnaire

There were eight questions on the questionnaire. The majority of the questions were multiple-choice. The first segment included three questions about the participants' age, gender, and their educational. Five questions about the social media usage as a device for education were included in the second section of the questionnaire. The second section asked questions about the participants' use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and Telegram, as well as their daily usage hours, professional reasons for using them, the significance of using various social media applications for education and professional development (improving knowledge, enhancing critical skills, ability to solve problems, innovation, and professional decision-making), and the impact of utilizing social media platforms to increase awareness regarding healthcare quality.

### 2.3. Data collection and Data analysis

The study's data were gathered by direct interview with health care workers and analyzed using the statistical package of social science (SPSS, V. 22), employing simple statistical procedures, and the findings are displayed in tables with mean scores and percentages in relation to the total number of participants.

## 3. Result

### 3.1. Socio-demographic information of health workers at Al-Qurnah hospital in Basra governorate

(Table 1) shows the socio-demographic characteristics of health care workers. The age of health care workers in this study showed that the highest percentage (52.5%) were aged 21-30. As for gender, the highest percentage was female, with a percentage of (56%). As for academic qualifications, the highest percentage is (46.5%) for the diploma.

**Table 1:** Socio-demographic information of health workers at Al-Qurnah hospital in Basra governorate

| No. | Socio-demographic characteristics | Option    | N   | %      |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----|--------|
| 1   | Age (years)                       | 21 – 30   | 105 | 52.5 % |
|     |                                   | 31–40     | 51  | 25.5 % |
|     |                                   | 41–50     | 33  | 16.5 % |
|     |                                   | 51–60     | 11  | 5.5 %  |
| 2   | Gender                            | Male      | 88  | 44 %   |
|     |                                   | Female    | 112 | 56 %   |
| 3   | Professional qualification        | Diploma   | 93  | 46.5 % |
|     |                                   | Bachelor  | 74  | 37.0 % |
|     |                                   | Master    | 17  | 8.5 %  |
|     |                                   | Doctorate | 16  | 8.0 %  |

### 3.2. General questions about Social media networks site usage among healthcare professionals

(Table 2) shows general questions about social media networks site usage among healthcare professionals, in relation to any of the most popular social media networks sites (29%) using Facebook. (50%) of participants consume almost three hours each day on social media networks, and 51.5% use these networks for professional networking purposes.

**Table 2:** General questions about social media networks site usage among healthcare professionals (type, time and reasons of using social media)

| No | Question                                                                                   | Option                                            | Response  | %          |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1  | Which of these social networking platforms do you utilize? Pick one or more options.       | Facebook                                          | <b>58</b> | <b>29%</b> |
|    |                                                                                            | Twitter                                           | <b>38</b> | <b>19%</b> |
|    |                                                                                            | Instagram                                         | <b>26</b> | <b>13%</b> |
|    |                                                                                            | YouTube                                           | <b>52</b> | <b>26%</b> |
|    |                                                                                            | Snapchat                                          | <b>26</b> | <b>13%</b> |
| 2  | What is the average amount of time you spend each day on social media?                     | Less than 1 hour                                  | 21        | 10.5 %     |
|    |                                                                                            | Up to 2 hours                                     | 57        | 28.5 %     |
|    |                                                                                            | Up to 3 hours                                     | 100       | 50 %       |
|    |                                                                                            | Up to 4 hours                                     | 12        | 6 %        |
|    |                                                                                            | Up to 5 hours                                     | 10        | 5 %        |
| 3  | For what purposes are social media networks used professionally? pick one or more options. | Networking                                        | 103       | 51.5 %     |
|    |                                                                                            | Health promotion                                  | 19        | 9.5 %      |
|    |                                                                                            | Opportunities for studies and employment          | 22        | 11 %       |
|    |                                                                                            | Professional development and educational pursuits | 44        | 22 %       |
|    |                                                                                            | Self-promotion                                    | 12        | 6 %        |

### 3.3. The outcomes to utilize social media sites on professional development and practice for health care workers at Qurnah hospital

(Table 3) shows the outcomes to utilize social media sites on the professional development of healthcare workers, as

YouTube has a mean score of (3.19) and (44.5%) of participants using YouTube all the time for professional development, while we note that the lowest platform had an impact on the professional development of healthcare workers, with a mean score of (2.08) for Twitter.

**Table 3:** The outcomes to utilize social media sites on professional development and practice for health care workers at Al-Qurnah hospital

| Option    | Never      | Rarely      | Most of the time | All the time | Mean score |
|-----------|------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|------------|
| Facebook  | 15 (7.5 %) | 50 (25 %)   | 61(30.5 %)       | 74 (37%)     | 2.97       |
| Twitter   | 50 (25 %)  | 97 (48.5 %) | 41 (20.5 %)      | 12 (6%)      | 2.08       |
| Instagram | 30 (15 %)  | 80 (40 %)   | 74 (37 %)        | 16 (8%)      | 2.38       |
| Telegram  | 49 (24.5)  | 56 (28 %)   | 39 (19.5 %)      | 56 (28 %)    | 2.51       |
| YouTube   | 10 (5 %)   | 30 (15 %)   | 71 (35.5 %)      | 89 (44.5%)   | 3.19       |
| Snap chat | 22 (11 %)  | 83 (41.5 %) | 39 (19.5 %)      | 56 (28%)     | 2.65       |

### 3.4 The importance of using social networking sites for health workers at Al-Qurnah hospital

(Table 4) shows the importance of using social networking sites for health care workers at Al-Qurnah hospital. We find

that it is very helpful (75%) in improving critical skills as well as in improving creativity (34.5%). Also, we find (65%) not at all helpful in improving professional decision-making.

**Table 4:** The importance of using social networking sites for health workers at Al-Qurnah Hospital

| Option                                  | Not at all helpful | Somehow helpful | Very helpful | Mean score |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Improving knowledge about profession    | 120 (60 %)         | 66 (33 %)       | 14 (7 %)     | 1.33       |
| Improving critical skills               | 18 (9 %)           | 32 (16 %)       | 150 (75 %)   | 2.66       |
| Improving problem-solving skills        | 68 (34 %)          | 80 (40 %)       | 52 (26 %)    | 1.92       |
| Improving creativity                    | 16 (8 %)           | 115 (57.5 %)    | 69 (34.5 %)  | 2.65       |
| Improving professional decision –making | 130 (65 %)         | 44 (22 %)       | 26 (13 %)    | 1.48       |

## 4. Discussion

Global internet usage, including social media usage, is rising quickly <sup>[14]</sup>. Most people agree that social media, or the participatory web, is quickly changing how the public interacts with medical professionals and how regular people look for and use medical information <sup>[15]</sup>. Prominent public health institutions are compelled to incorporate social media platforms into their communication tactics due to the significant transformation in citizens communication patterns and revised anticipations regarding the level of transparency, openness, and adaptation of the communication surroundings <sup>[16]</sup>.

Related to the most widely used social networking sites (29%) of health care workers using Facebook for networking purposes at a percentage 51.5%, this may be its most popular, content variety, and networking capabilities. According to the impact of the use of social networking sites on the

professional development of healthcare workers, this study is finding YouTube more impacts on the professional development. This may be to increased medical information and increased connections between patients and health workers. Another study discovered that social media use for information sharing, patient-doctor connections, and crisis management has a favorable effect on healthcare systems. Conversely, the delivery of healthcare was not significantly impacted by the usage of social media for promotion purposes <sup>[17]</sup>. Also another study has investigated the use of Facebook and YouTube for the dissemination and collection of knowledge. Videos on YouTube can be used to transmit any evidence that promotes skill development because they offer direct visualization of the process <sup>[18]</sup>.

The result in our study revealed that Twitter is less used for professional development among health care workers; this may be because it is less impactful in educational and

resource areas, while online social media platforms have impacted nursing education; according to a survey, 53% of nursing schools are using Twitter to help them become more adept at making clinical decisions in life-threatening situations <sup>[19]</sup>. The importance of using social networking sites for health care workers at Al-Qurnah hospital, we find that it is very helpful (75%) in improving critical skills as well as in improving creativity (34.5%), where another paper found three potential benefits of social media for medical and health care activities will be addressed: improved quality of treatment, enhanced participatory medicine, and improved emergency planning and preparedness <sup>[20]</sup>.

Our study revealed that improving knowledge about professions (7%) only, while for improving hard skills, it was very useful (75%). By using SM, this may be due to a lack of reliability, so consistent with similar research, which revealed that SM application for clinical practice is severely limited by a lack of consistency <sup>[21]</sup>.

The results revealed that health care providers tend to spend up to more than 3 hours a day using social networking sites at a rate of 50%, and these results are consistent with a study showed health workers concurred that SM platforms are inexpensive and simple to use, don't require any special training, offer a large variety of content quickly, and offer a professional arena for conversation, so use at a rate of 50% <sup>[18]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusions

According to the findings, a large percentage of participants used the following social media in descending order for professional development: YouTube, Facebook, Snap Chat, Telegram, Instagram, and Twitter. The most widely used social networking sites (29%) use Facebook. (50%) is more than 3 hours, and the reasons for using social networking sites professionally are to network 51.5%. The importance of using social networking sites for health workers. We find that it is very helpful (75%) in improving critical skills and not helpful in improving professional decision-making (65%).

## 6. Recommendations

The findings suggested that social media could be useful for healthcare workers further research on this topic was recommended. Health facilities should create social media instructions and educate staff members about the dangers of using social media.

## 7. Ethical approval

Informed permission for participating in the study was assumed by completing the questionnaire, and ethics approval was acquired from the training and human development center of the Basra health department. Also, approval was obtained from the Al-Qurnah Hospital.

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