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CONSUMERS' HEALTH INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF LAUTECH TEACHING HOSPITAL LIBRARY AND LAUTECH COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES MEDICAL LIBRARY IN OSOGBO, OSUN STATE, NIGFRIA.

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# CONSUMERS' HEALTH INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF LAUTECH TEACHING HOSPITAL LIBRARY AND LAUTECH COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES MEDICAL LIBRARY IN OSOGBO, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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#### **Abstract**

The study was conducted to investigate the consumers' health seeking information behaviour on social media using LAUTECH Teaching Hospital Library and LAUTECH College of Health Sciences Medical Library as a case study. The web of Science Core Collection and healthcare database was searched for existing literature on consumer health information seeking on social media. The study employed the use of Quantitative research method. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprises 250 consumers of health information while 234 was retrieved and used for this study. Questionnaire containing structured question was designed and administered to the respondents. Data was collected on consumer's health information seeking behaviour on social media. It was concluded base on the findings of this study that health information literacy skills of the consumers would enhance their health information seeking from social media. Therefore, roles of health information/sciences librarians are crucial to meeting the consumers' health information needs and understanding their health information seeking behaviour (needs and sources) through social media in order to increase more access to mobile health (mHealth). The benefits of mHealth to consumers to meet their health-related information needs from social media with the aid of their level of health information literacy skills which include improve access; require little space, active 24/7, easy retrieval of information among others. The identified information literacy skills required to be developed by the health information seeking consumers from mHealth include active learning, information seeking and search skills, information retrieval skills, critical thinking, problemsolving skills, and information evaluating skills.

Keywords: health information, consumer health, health information seeking, social media, Ladoke Akintola University

#### Introduction

It is obvious from the literature that we have certain bodily strengths and weakness which influence our resistance and susceptibility to disease. However good or bad, this inherited constitution is, good health choices enable us to make the very best of what we have been given. Poor choices will have the opposite effect. Therefore it is necessary for consumers to consult for health information through the medium in order to prevent diseases. Disease never comes without a cause. It is not our fate or our stars, nor is it often entirely due to factors beyond our control. Most disease are due to the simple outworking of the laws of cause and effect; they are mainly the results of violations of the laws of health. Therefore, Consumers need to know their health status for longevity or life span.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the Consumer Health Information Seeking Behaviour On Social Media: A Case Study of Lautech Teaching Hospital Library and LAUTECH College of Health Sciences Medical Library. The specific objectives are:

- 1. To identify the benefits of Health Information to the consumers
- 2. To find awareness of the types of social media by the consumers and librarians.
- 3. To identify the Factors facilitating the use of social media.
- 4. To find out the consumers health information seeking on Social Media.

#### Consumer

A consumer is a person or a group who intends to order, orders or uses purchased goods, products or services primarily for personal, social, family, household and similar needs, not directly related to entrepreneurial or business activities. (Wikipedia)

#### Health

In human beings, the extent of an individual's continuing physical, emotional, mental and social ability to cope with his environment. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010)

#### Seeking

This is an attempt or desire to obtain or achieve (something)

#### **Information**

Information deals with the processes of storing and transferring knowledge

#### **Behavior**

The way in which one act or conducts oneself, especially toward others.

**Consumer's health information seeking behavior** can be described from the above definitions as the extent ability of a an individual to search, select, evaluate and use health information for personal, social, family, household and similar needs. It is noted that the health information prevent abnormal structure and function.

#### Consumers seek health information on the following:

HIV(Human Immune Deficiency Virus), AIDS, STDs(Sexually Transmitted Diseases), How to cope with stress, How to stop smoking, How to stop drinking of alcohol, The use and abuse of drugs, Knowing your weight, Diet/Nutrition, Reducing disease(cancer) risk, Allergies and First aid

Therefore, consumer health information is a high profile topic for national government, local authorities, health authorities, and educational agencies. Consumer health information plays a crucial role in the development of a healthy, inclusive and equitable social, Psychological and physical environment. It reflects current best practice, using an empowering, multi-dimensional, multi-professional approach which relates to all settings, organizations and parts and levels of society including schools, colleges, universities, the health services, the community and the workplace (Kumar, 2009). This makes imperative for the health information librarian/professional to provide relevant and useful information for the consumers to assess available health information from different sources according to their needs. The sources include the most sources for consumers to seek health information include social media namely LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc.

**Social Media**: a form of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). Social media remain catalyst in reshaping the health information access by the consumer. The purpose of using social media by consumer to obtain health information include: collaboration, communication and rendering of services. Social media is viewed as an important tool for enticing and retaining patrons who are already familiar with and immersed into the world of social media

Importantly, Social media has gradually crept into the library profession which has become a growing tool that is being used to communicate with more potential library users; extending and offering better services to users.(Abdullahi 2018). Technologies such as social media applications are powerful technological tools for communication interaction, creating, and sharing information. Thus, social media has evolved into a dynamic, interactive, and collaborative platform that facilitates exchange of knowledge and information amongst its users. consumers are not being adequately aware of these new technology and potentials they offer in developing the consumer and will affect the consumer's ability to use and harness the social

media. Social media is a means of interaction among people of different of ages in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network. The traditional way of meeting each other is long gone and now the world meets on social websites. It is an instrument of communication which provides information and allows consumers to interact with each other (Abdullahi, 2018).

#### **Literature Review**

Emphatically, as the world of health care is booming and proves to be one of the fastest growing industries today, Health information has grown and developed dramatically, in an era of digital age. With healthcare, is the prevention, treatment, and management on illness or the preservation of mental and physical well-being through the services offered by medical, nursing, and allied health professions (Oxford Dictionary).

The definition of 'health information' in the draft National Health Privacy Code includes a similar list of elements to the Privacy Act definition. The major difference in the draft Code definition is that it expressly includes information or opinion about 'the physical, mental or psychological health (at any time), of an individual'. The Privacy Act defines 'health information' as follows: information or an opinion about: the health or a disability (at any time) of an individual; or an individual's expressed wishes about the future provision of health services to him or her; or a health service provided, or to be provided, to an individual; that is also personal information.

Inevitably, there is therefore a need for quality medical training through educational system; health education that would make their educational aspiration to be achieved, through learning experiences that assist individuals in making informed decisions in order to increase people' health status (World Health Organization, 2017). One vital option available is utilization of quality health information to promote and enhance good healthy living and to more save lives.

Health information plays an indispensable role in the aspect of attaining and maintaining a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 2017). In this definition, health may seem idealistic and unattainable but its frequent quotation reflects symbolic significance in highlighting the importance of a multidimensional positive view of health. Other definitions suggest that health can be viewed in terms of resilience and the capacity of individuals, families and communities to cope successfully with risk or adversity. The following pronouncement from the WHO emphasizes the dynamic and aspirational nature of health and its many social and environmental correlates: to reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or

group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a positive concept encompassing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities (Andualem, Kebede & Kumie, 2013).

Due to development in internet technology, online access to vital health information for utilization on health issues is here to stay for medical competiveness globally (Ajuwon and Popoola, 2014). The computer revolution and Information Technology (IT) have transformed modern health care systems in the areas of communication, teaching, storage and retrieval of medical information. These developments have positively impacted patient management and the training and retraining of healthcare providers. Little information is available on the level of training and utilization of IT among health care professionals in developing countries (Bowen, Dykes & Demiris, 2014).

Zhao and Zhang (2017) reviewed literature the way peer patients seek out health information in social media and then assist health care providers, health professionals and health librarians to understand patients' and caregivers' needs. The authors' findings stated that online health intervention programmes designed to offer social support to health consumers in a timely and effective manner. This was because social media have become significant online venues for the exchange of health-related information and advice. Health information obtained from the Internet might impacted patient health care outcomes. Previous studies sought to survey how health information consumers accessed health information on different social media platforms.

Adeoye, Tomomowo-Ayodele, Oladapo and Abimbola, (2019) conducted a survey on health information needs and sources of rural dwellers in Egbedore local government area, Osun State. The study discovered that health information needs of the rural dwellers varied according to different individuals. Also, their sources of health information were mostly from friends, colleagues, radio, television, health officers/workers among others. The reason might because they were illiterate (Abdulraheem, Olapipo & Amodu, 2012). Therefore, might impair them to be Internet users, that looked online for health information.

Abimbola and Adeoye, (2018) investigated a survey on access and use of reference sources and services for health information among Nigerian undergraduates, used Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa, Edo state. as a case study. The authors established that health information was germane to undergraduates in making information decision about their health and to adopt healthier lifestyle. The study concluded that there were needs to adequately equipped library with relevant, current and concise reference sources and other information resources that would meet the health information needs of the students.

## Health Science Librarians' Professional Impact on Consumers Health Information Seek in Social Media

Social media provides an efficient platform for general users, patients and their relatives to access information from other users ask help and advice from other users, make contributions to others, receive assistance from the forum and share their experiences in the community. With the access to health information on the social media platforms, people find useful information

more effectively and personally than traditional information retrieval through search engines. In view of this, health science librarians; roles are germane for improving consumers health information seek in social media (Ajayi, 2013).

A health or medical library is designed to assist physicians, health professionals, students, patients, consumers, medical researchers, and n finding health and scientific information to improve, update, assess, or evaluate health care. Medical libraries are typically found in hospitals, medical schools, private industry, and in medical or health associations. A typical health or medical library has access to MEDLINE, a range of electronic resources, print and digital journal collections, and print reference books. The influence of open access (OA) and free searching via Google and PubMed has a major impact on the way medical libraries operate . (Beck, Richard, Ngnyen-Thanh, Monagui Parizot & Renahy, 2014).

Medical librarians are skilled professionals who assist with resources and research in the medical professions. The focus of the medical librarian is to emphasize the use of evidence based research and practice. This can be for both medical research and medical practice. As well the medical librarian is expected be a resource for assisting with publishing and presentation of research. Medical librarians use web based resources to conduct research and help generate evidence based approaches to healthcare. Organizations such as the MLA set standards for what a medical librarian should follow in practice. Health sciences librarians provided information on topics such as: Medical conditions or diseases; Prescription medications; Surgical procedures; General physician and hospital information; Book and website recommendations for further reading (Susannah Fox and Maeve Duggan, 2013)

As technology advances, the medical librarian's role is diversifying. Medical librarians support research through advanced search skills, instruction on effective use of information resources, and support of institution-level performance improvement or quality initiatives. Some participate in hospital rounds as clinical medical librarians, providing direct support as caregiver team members. Others fill the role of informationists, contributing both information science and clinical/biomedical science.

To keep up with the increasing availability of online resources, today's librarians are adept at gaining access to electronic resources through contract and licensing negotiations. They make information resources accessible from multiple locations; whether through enhanced retrieval from search engines or automated linking, medical librarians provide seamless access to full-text articles from PubMed citations. They can also establish proxy-server systems, which allow access to information from outside the institution.

Librarians may also lead their institutions on maintaining compliance with copyright guidelines. Through their management of print and online journals, books, and information resources, medical libraries provide a deep knowledge base for the institution. This includes

access to national guidelines, systematic reviews (e.g., the Cochrane Collaboration), or point-of-care tools (e.g., UpToDate), whether resources are focused by subject (e.g., drug information) or provider type (e.g., nursing-related collections).

Medical libraries help health systems improve outcomes by providing focused, reliable access to knowledge and information that defines best practice and evidence. They play key roles in achieving a higher quality of care that improves patient experience and population health, and reduces cost. With the expertise to efficiently search the literature, medical librarians save valuable clinician time and provide evidence to support data-driven improvement and identify improvement opportunities. For many health systems with an outcomes improvement strategy, the medical library is a critical asset (Booth, 2011).

Nevertheless, increasing competence in consumers' information literacy skills will serve as the foundation for effective information provision on health care through the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources among medical practitioners. As cited in the work of Levesque and Aname, (2013). () that health information literacy is the abilities needed to recognize a health information need; identify likely information sources and use them to retrieve relevant information; assess the quality of the information and applicability to specific situation; and analyze, understand, and use the information to make good health decisions (Asemahagn, 2017)..

Ajuwon (2015) asserted that this could only be done through medical libraries which are specialized to institutions established to provide resources in the dissemination of health information and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Therefore, it is obvious that medical libraries should be able to provide information to enable users and policy makers provide answers to health related issues with the integration of Information and Communication Technology for proper utilization of health information in medical schools in Nigeria( Abimbola & Adeoye, 2018).

The provision of health information especially in the information age portends challenges for the medical libraries and librarians. Medical libraries aim at maintaining balanced collection to remain relevant in the information age, and it can be achieved through Information and Communication Technology use and links with medical databases offered by MEDLINE, HINARI, JSTOR, MEDSTRIDE, which referred as medical library in CD and other e-library resources (Adeoye & Popoola ,2011). World Health Organization (2001) developed and launched HINARI, in order to bridge the information gap between rich and poor countries. As a result of vast increase in the amount of information and the complexity of information sources, (Ajuwon & Olorunsaye, 2013) supported the urgent need to relearn search techniques and to acquire more sophisticated information handling skills. Health Information has assumed paramount importance in all facets of world development and economic growth.

#### Methodology:

The study employed the use of Quantitative research method. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprises 250 consumers of health information while 234 was retrieved and used for this study. Questionnaire containing structured question was designed and administered to the respondents. Data was collected on consumer's health information seeking behaviour in social media.

Table 1: Distribution of questionnaires to the consumers of health Information in LAUTECH Medical and Teaching Hospital Libraries, Osogbo.

Respondents	Admin	Returned	%
Nurses	50	46	20%
Resident Doctors	50	45	19%
Medical Students	150	143	61%
Total	250	234	100%

Respondent were asked of the benefits of Health Information to the consumers these scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Their responses are presented as follows

**Table 2: Benefits of Health Information to the consumers** 

	SA	A	D	SD
Statement				
Use of health information in social media allows consumers to know their health status	200	20	13	1
Use of health information in social media allow consumers to the potential health information in technology	215	10	7	2
Use of health information in social media helps the consumers to enhance their standard of living.	140	80	12	2
Use of health information in social media allows the consumers to share and collaborate with their professional colleagues	134	75	20	5
Statement	SA	A	D	SD
Use of health information in social media allows the consumers to create, change and disseminate information to their colleagues	212	11	7	4
Use of health information in social media enhance Librarian-consumer relationship	14	60	80	80
Use of health information in social media improve patient safety by reducing medication and medical errors	115	105	4	10

Use of health information in social media increase	205	10	3	6
efficiency by eliminating unnecessary paper work				
and handling				
Use of health information in social media eliminate	180	50	3	1
redundant or unnecessary testing.				
Use of health information in social media provide	165	30	15	24
caregiver with clinical decision support tools for				
more effective care and treatment.				
Use of health information in social media improve	192	20	18	4
public health reporting and monitoring				
Use of health information in social media engage	200	15	10	9
health care consumers regarding their personal				
health information				
Use of health information in social media improve	185	40	6	3
heath care quality and outcomes				
Use of health information in social media reduce	108	60	54	12
health related cost.				
Use of social media makes health information	39	40	70	85
sharing, dissemination and collaboration between				
librarian and the consumer more interactive.				

Respondents were asked to rate the benefit of the use of social media on health information. Table 2 reveals that, the following frequencies: 200, 215, 140, 134, 212, 80, 115,205,180, 165 192, 200, 185,108 and 85 show that majority of the respondents unanimously have benefitted from the social media on health information.

Table 3: Awareness of the types of social Media by the consumers and librarians

Social media	Frequency/Per	Total	
	Yes I am aware	No, I'm not aware	
Twitter	213 (91%)	21 (9.0%)	234 (100%
LinkedIn	59 (25.2.2%)	175 (74.8%)	234 (100%)
YouTube	233 (99.6%)	1 (0.4%)	234 (100%
Facebook	234 (100%)	0 (0%)	234 (100%)
MySpace	17 (7.3%)	217 (92.7%)	234 (100%)
Ning	8 (3.4%)	226 (96.6%)	234 (100%)
Wikis	64 (27.4%)	170 (72.6%)	234 (100%)
Blogs	84 (35.9%)	150 (64.1%)	234 (100%)
Flickr	42 (17.9%)	192 (82.0%)	234 (100%)
Telegram	220 (94%)	14 (6.0%)	234 (100%)
Whatsapp	234 (100%)	0	234 (100%)
Webinar	192 (82 %)	42 (17.9%)	234 (100%)
Pinterest	184 (78.6%)	150 (64.1%)	234 (100%)
Others	14 (6%)	220 (94.0%)	234 (100%)

Respondents were asked to indicate the factors that would facilitate the use of social media in health information. Their responses are presented as follows:

Table 3: Factors facilitating the use of social media

Factors	Frequency		Total	
	Yes	No	234	
Provision of state of the art ICT facilities	184	50	234	
Frequent training, workshop, seminars on the use of social media	180	54	234	
Sufficient knowledge and skills to use the social media(Information literacy skills)	178	56	234	
Commitment of library management	196	38	234	
Others	24	210	234	

Respondents were asked to indicate the factors that facilitate the use of social media on health information. Table 3 clearly shows that majority of the respondents were unanimous on factors that can facilitate the use of social media on health information, although 24 of the respondents indicated that other factors such as establishment of unit to take the responsibility of the use of social media on health information in the library and exposing the librarian the simplicity of social media application in library services. The analysis shows that the provision of the above mentioned factors to the librarians under study would go along way to facilitate effective and efficient use of the social media.

Table 4: Consumers Health Information Seeking on Social Media.

Social Media Awareness	Frequency	Percentage	
Yes	230	(98.3%)	
No I am Not	4	(1.7%)	
Total	234	(100%)	
Level of Awareness			
Not sure	18	(7.7%)	
High	168	(71.8%)	
Very high	48	(20.5%)	

#### **Discussion of Findings**

On the consumer's health information seeking behaviour, the study found that 160 of 234 (68.37%) consumers disagree and strongly disagree that use of health information in social media enhance Health Information Librarian-consumer relationship and 155 (62.23%) disagree and strongly disagree that Use of social media makes health information sharing, dissemination and collaboration between librarian and the consumer more interactive.

From the above findings the reason is due inadequate Frequent training, workshop, seminars on the use of social media as 180 (76.9%) of 234 total respondents disagreed on it.

On the awareness on the use of social media. The findings revealed that the consumers were more aware of facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Telegram and YouTube more than the other types of social media. It was also revealed Consumers were more aware of these social media for seeking behaviour and their level of awareness is high.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The role of librarians (health information professionals) are aware of consumer health information seeking on social media and have a positive perception towards the technology; which can improve delivery of health information to the consumers. The present study has highlighted factors such as training, provision of ICT facilities, sufficient knowledge and skills. Base on the findings the study recommends increased awareness of other types of social media tools especially those that are known to librarians by the library through training programs such as conferences, seminars, and workshops on social for seeking health information by consumers. Therefore, roles of health information/sciences librarians are crucial to meet the consumers; health information needs and understand their health information seeking behavior (needs and sources) from social media, in order to increase more access to mobile health. The benefits of mHealth to consumers to meet their health-related information needs from social media with the aid of their level of health information literacy skills which include improve, access, require little space, active 24/7, easy retrieval of information among others. The identified information literacy skills required to be developed by the health information seeking consumers from mHealth include active learning, information seeking and search skills, information retrieval skills, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and information evaluating skills.

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