

# Social Networks and Health Information in Times of Pandemic

## Las Redes Sociales Y La Información De Salud En Tiempos De Pandemia

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### ABSTRACT

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### Editorial

Given the situation that health professionals have been facing to achieve an effective fight against the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the authors consider it pertinent to exchange with the rest of the scientific community on the role of Social Networks in the dissemination of health information in these times of pandemic. Since the emergence of social networks, they have been used to maintain distance communication between people, share news, feelings, among many other purposes. In its evolution, modalities have been integrated that increasingly perfect this form of social communication, giving greater promptness to messages and new audiovisual forms.

Science, also in constant development, uses this possibility and these networks are a way of making known and exchanging among the scientific population, criteria and points of view to analyze phenomena, carry out public health campaigns, access patients or carry out therapeutic interventions. At various times the effectiveness of the use of these networks in medical sciences has been demonstrated. The pandemic that hit the world caused by COVID-19 led to recontextualizing dissimilar processes of daily life, teleworking, distance education, video consultations, among many other forms, have come to perpetuate themselves over time. People

subjected to long periods of confinement, as the most effective way to avoid contagion, saw the use of social networks as a way to maintain contact with friends, colleagues and family virtually, maintaining social distancing without losing the connection social relationship. The forms of interaction, as well as the exchange or consumption of information, have changed radically in recent years. We currently live in a hyperconnected society, in which the existing means of communication between people have changed very clearly, due to the widespread use of the Internet and the use of social networks.

These same forms are used to search for information related to medical care, it is pertinent to note that it is not always reliable. Currently, a large number of people search on the Internet before requesting a consultation, share their experiences and follow those of others, even influencing the choice of treatment, hospital or health professional. The presence of health institutions is increasing on social networks, with the aim of improving the quality of life of the population, providing updated information. There are health promotion campaigns, sites specialized in a certain topic and support for patients with a specific disease, but we cannot forget that all this information must always be consulted with qualified medical personnel, which allows the veracity of what is verified. that can be found. Digital sociability is currently achieved in the field of a health condition shared by people from very different environments brought together by the Internet and not in classic physical places such as hospitals, health centers, doctor's offices, among others [1]. The function of health authorities to inform in the midst of the pandemic requires correct use of social networks to avoid a medium social crisis. While health professionals have great knowledge about disease prevention and health promotion, they face difficulties that prevent the effective communication of this information so vital to society [2]. Mass communication is achieved through networks, with a community and interpersonal profile. This plays an important role in the dissemination of knowledge, modification or reinforcement of behaviors, values, social norms and in stimulating change processes that contribute to improving the quality of life.

This form of interaction must be in the process of transforming and reorganizing services to intensify their effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and quality. The current pandemic has brought a huge advantage to the use of online platforms. Tools have been introduced that allow patients to be assessed using photos, videos and questionnaires, replacing in-person appointments, this being an advantage for doctors and patients, as they avoid the latter's

travel to healthcare centers, thus maintaining biosafety measures. Certainly the pandemic has led to greater consumption of social networks. Forms have been put at the service of the population that allow them to know the results of tests carried out by themselves or relatives, the possibility of online shopping, recreation, news updates, among others. The information issued by the media is capable of directing the interest and behavior of the population, so it is necessary to disseminate truthful information that encourages compliance with health measures [3]. Although the use of social networks offers different benefits, it is no less true that it is necessary to be careful when using them. The excessive use of this form of communication can devirtualize the quality of human relationships, as real-physical contact is replaced by the virtual relationship that involves interacting through a screen. This can cause deterioration in family relationships, lack of communication between household members and, therefore, the lack of knowledge of parents about the health problems their children have. Another important aspect is the possibility that any member of the family nucleus has to access and be part of communities that can lead to eating disorders, events of violence, among other negative manifestations [4].

Social networks are ideal for communicating medical information effectively, especially during health crises like the current one, with infinite possibilities to work on the well-being of the population by raising their health status. It has the advantage of being able to reach a greater number of people in less time and with the possibility of broadcasting this information in different languages at the same time. Despite all these advantages, it is pertinent to point out that direct patient-medical exchange will never lose its leading role.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

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