Exploring the Landscape of Depression Content on Instagram: A Comprehensive Analysis of Relevance, Characteristics, and Quality

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ABSTRACT:
Introduction: Depression is a complex, medically relevant illness Depression is a major public health problem This research delves into the intricate landscape of depression-related content on Instagram, evaluating the relevance, characteristics, and quality of 500 posts across five prominent depression-related hashtags. This study offers insights into the dynamics of information dissemination on depression through this popular social media platform, shedding light on potential opportunities and challenges. **Materials and Methods**: A systematic analysis of 500 Instagram posts with five key depression-related hashtags was conducted, focusing on English content. Inclusion criteria ensured the relevance of each post. Categorization by type, collection of engagement metrics, and noting post-characteristics were performed. Quality and reliability assessments, along with statistical analyses, were compared among different groups. **Results**: The analysis revealed 392 relevant posts with images constituting 96.17% of the content. Forty-seven percent of the posts on Instagram were from the health and wellness industry, with 20.15% coming from doctors, 18.75% from survivors, and 12.5% from others, as Instagram is an effective marketing source for promotional content. **Discussion**: Exploring the content of depression unveiled insights into its etiology, symptoms, treatment, and support groups. Notably, promotional content underscores Instagram's role as a marketing platform. The assessment of post quality and reliability, presented in Table 4, highlights intriguing findings. Additionally, data stratification into healthcare professionals (Group A) and other sources (Group B) showed a statistically significant difference in the percentage of correct information, as shown in Tables 5 and 6. **Conclusion**: This comprehensive analysis contributes to a nuanced understanding of the content landscape of depression on Instagram, aiming to enrich the ongoing discourse on mental health communication in the digital age. By evaluating the relevance, characteristics, and quality, this study provides valuable insights into potential areas for improvement.

Keywords: depression, depression help, depression is real, depression awareness, depression support

INTRODUCTION:

Depression is a complex, medically relevant illness. According to the Global Health Estimates of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2015, depression affected 4.4% of the global population.[1] That amounts to a total of 322 million people living with depression, and the numbers are increasing.[1] In a span of ten years, from 2005 to 2015, the prevalence of depression increased by approximately 19%. [1] Globally, depression contributed 7.5% of all years lived with disability (YLDs) in 2015, making it the greatest contributor to the non-fatal disease burden.[1] Additionally, depression contributes to approximately 800,000 suicides annually.

Depression is highly prevalent among patients with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes mellitus (DM), with 9-23% of patients presenting with comorbid depression, depending on the illness.[2] However, depression is left undiagnosed in approximately 42-48% of patients with chronic physical illness [3].

Mental health, including depression, remains a highly stigmatized area of healthcare, and people often conceal their concerns rather than seek assistance or treatment. It may therefore be a reason for patients to find an avenue to connect with people with similar experiences and to seek support on the Internet in their research.

Social media platforms are developing progressively as rich sources of mass communication. Social media platforms are progressively developing as a rich source of mass communication. Social media is emerging as a powerful tool with the continuous expansion of

technology and other factors in spreading awareness and education regarding various socially relevant concepts. According to a study conducted in 2011, 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media sites more available 24 h of a day and 7 days a week, the adolescents log on to social media sites more than ten times a day, 22% of the adolescents log on to social media sites more than ten times a day, more than half of the adolescents log on to social media sites more than ten times a day, and more than half of the adolescents log on to social media sites more than once a day. Most of this generation's emotional and social development is happening on the Internet and cell phones. The social media platforms provide them with a variety of benefits such as socialization and communication, enhanced learning opportunities, and access to health information 4 Instagram has grown in popularity among young adults and adolescents and is currently the second-favorite social network in the world, Instagram is the second most downloaded mobile app of the year 2022.5

Expanding into this area as a medical professional or healthcare organization can help patients obtain easy access to proper information.

The aims and objectives of this study were to assess the quality and reliability of content related to depression on Instagram by analyzing the DISCERN and global quality scores (GQS) to identify knowledge gaps, improve patient education, and maintain a record of high-quality content to facilitate patient education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

An observational study was conducted in April 2023, where the author scoured and evaluated 20 Instagram posts daily using predetermined keywords related to depression. The posts were then organized based on their relevance to the keywords depression, depression help, depression is real, depression awareness, depression support" The author completed a Google Forms questionnaire after each post, and a total of 500 posts were evaluated. A total of 108 posts were excluded based on repeated entries or failure to meet the inclusion criteria, which included relevance to the topic of depression in "English." A total of 392 posts were analyzed, and their characteristics, such as images and videos, were evaluated. The number of likes, views, and comments was also evaluated, and the DISCERN and GQS scores were calculated independently. The median values of these scores were included in the statistics, with the DISCERN score being a quality criteria system for consumer information, rewarding one point for clear aims and five points for uncertainty statements [6]. The GQS score ranges from one point for poor quality to five points for excellent quality [7]. The data were entered into Microsoft Excel 2020 (Microsoft Corporation, Washington, United States) and analyzed using SPSS Statistics version 16 (SPSS Inc. Released 2007. SPSS for Windows, Version 16.0. Chicago, SPSS Inc.

RESULTS:

However, after applying the inclusion/exclusion criteria and deleting repeated posts, a total of 392 posts were deemed eligible from the 500 posts evaluated in this study were deemed eligible.

Table 1: Number of relevant posts under each hashtag		
Hashtag name	Post analyzed	Relevant posts
#depression	100	88
#depression help	100	101
#depression is real	100	54
#depression awareness	100	92
#depression support	100	57
Total	500	392

Table 2 illustrates the attributes of the posts studied, which indicates that almost all of them were image posts (96.17%) compared with video posts (3.83%). The number of people engaged (reacted) to this post can be calculated by adding likes and comments. However, the actual reach (who viewed the post) could be much larger, as not everyone engages in it. The total number of likes was 2,104,691 and the total number of comments was 20.725. All the posts in English and related to our topic were deemed "relevant" and included in our study

Table 2: Characteristics of the posts analysed (n= 392)		
	N	% of total
Type of post		
Image / Post	377	96.17%

Video	15	3.83%
Total number of audiences reached by the posts		
Absolute no. 0f likes	2104691	
Absolute no. of comments	20725	
Posted by		
Doctor	79	20.15%
Health and wellness industry (include hospital ,nurse and other)	188	47%
Survivors	75	18.75%
Others	50	12.5%

Forty-seven percent of the posts on Instagram were from the health and wellness industry, with 20.15% coming from doctors, 18.75% from survivors, and 12.5% from others, as Instagram is an effective marketing source for promotional content.

Table 3 shows the types of information presented in the Instagram posts, with 55% describing symptoms of depression and 77.5% describing their cause or origin. However, only 45.25% discussed relevant investigations or tests to be conducted, and 40% discussed rehabilitation. Approximately 76.25% of the videos discussed the treatment options. Information about support groups and patient-sharing experiences with family members were the least discussed, with both having a cumulative score of 6.25%. Additionally, approximately 28.75% of the posts conveyed content from doctors and pharmaceutical companies.

	N	%
Etiology	69	17.60%
Prevalence	45	11.48%
Symptoms	217	55.36%
Diagnosis	81	20.66%
Screening	23	5.87%
Prevention	44	11.22%
Treatment	79	20.15%
Mortality	8	2.04%
Rehabilitation	63	16.07%
Support groups	90	22.96%
Own Experiences	128	32.65%
Family Experiences	6	1.53%

Comparisons of the GQS and reliability scores are shown in Table 4.

All the relevant posts were assessed for quality and reliability and 38.27% post were of medium quality and 31.38% were of low quality.36.99% of posts had very clear aims defined.

Table 4: Quality and reliability of the posts			
		N	%
Global Quality Score			
1	Very low (add sentence)	75	19.13%
2	Low	123	31.38%
3	Medium	150	38.27%

4	High	44	11.22%
5	Very High	0	0
Reliability Score			
1	Very clear	145	36.99%
2	clear	106	27.04%
3	unclear	121	30.87%
4	Not all areas are stated	20	5.10%
5	uncertain	0	0%

The data were divided into two groups. Information posted by doctors and others in the healthcare industry involved in active patient care (doctors, nurses, hospitals) was grouped into group A and all others as group B.

The percentage of correct information circulated was compared and the difference was statistically significant. p value 0.18

The mean + SD for global quality score and reliability was statistically significant in group A compared to group B, indicating that doctors, hospitals, and healthcare organizations were more likely to offer more quality content in their posts than others.

Table 5:			
	Group A (n=267)	Group B(n=125)	P value
No of correct post	185	66	0.18751
Percentage	69.29%	52.8%	
Global quality score Mean $\pm$ SD	2.58$\pm$0.90	2.06 $\pm$0.87	0.0001
Reliability score Mean $\pm$ SD	2.21 $\pm$ 0.92	1.69 $\pm$ 0.88	0.001

DISCUSSION:

Depression is one of the most widespread illnesses worldwide, affecting more than 300 million people. [8] Its persistence among patients, one-third of whom diagnosed with major depressive disorder, display either a period of recurrence or recovery or even sustained symptoms over many years [9]. The etiology of major depressive disorder is multifactorial, with both genetic and environmental factors playing a role. Some evidence suggests that genetic factors play a lesser role in late-onset depression than in early-onset depression. Neurodegenerative diseases (especially Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease), stroke, multiple sclerosis, seizure disorders, cancer, macular degeneration, and chronic pain, have been associated with higher rates of depression. Life events and hassles trigger depression development. Traumatic events such as the death or loss of a loved one, lack of or reduced social support, caregiver burden, financial problems, interpersonal difficulties, and conflicts are examples of stressors that can trigger depression. due to loneliness and inhibition to reach our support when the advent of more and more access to social media platforms people are looking out for new ways to find out the causes of disease and look out for treatment options one such social media platform is Instagram. [10]

Instagram is a social networking platform that offers users opportunities to create, connect, communicate, discover, and share photos and short videos. Users can choose photographic filters that alter the tone and color of the image. Users can search for and subscribe to other users in a personally curated feed, who share content, comments, and links. Instagram service reached one billion monthly active users eight years after it was first launched [11]

Traditional self-disclosure literature suggests that people share positive events with their networks more readily than negative ones [12]. People experiencing stressful events may be reluctant to share negative emotions due to self-presentation concerns and the stigma of being depressed or sad [13]

A study by Andalibi 2015 examined depression-related imagery on Instagram and highlighted the need to understand the role of photo sharing in the lives of individuals with depression established the importance of visual imagery as a vehicle for expressing aspects of depression which was consistent with our study where 96.17% of posts were images [14]

Exploring the content about depression unveiled insights into etiology, symptoms, treatment, and support groups. Depression is a common disorder encountered by nurse practitioners, primary care providers, psychiatrists, and mental health workers, coordinating as an interprofessional healthcare team. This disorder is associated with extremely high morbidity, including the risk of suicide. 15

Preference for content suggests that individuals seek out content that boosts their esteem or content with a "human touch. Pettigrew and colleagues found that a spokesperson who possessed considerable knowledge on the topic was considered an ideal candidate to speak up about health issues.16

The assessment of post quality and reliability, presented in Table 5, highlighted intriguing findings with data stratification into healthcare professionals (Group A) and other sources (Group B), showing a statistically significant difference in the percentage of correct information, highlighting the need for healthcare professionals to provide correct information so that viewers can seek support early.

CONCLUSION:

Through a comprehensive analysis of its relevance, characteristics, and quality, this study provides a nuanced understanding of Instagram's role for people seeking content on depression and aims to enrich the ongoing discourse on mental health communication in the digital age and encourage healthcare professionals to provide accurate and informative content on Instagram so that people seeking answers can approach appropriate management and support at the right time.

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