

Dealing with Health Misinformation in Diverse Social Media

School of Medicine, Tzu Chi University, Taiwan

Kun-Ting Lo, Yi-Chen Chiang, Ya-Chu Chang, Hao-Yu Tseng

Abstract

Living in the era when the Internet facilitates the transmission of messages, we have learned that useful content regarding health spread rapidly via social media, and so does health misinformation. Once the misinformation is widely accepted, it launches various adverse impacts domestically and internationally, and it even causes the society to be immersed in panic and fear as well as increasing the risk of mortality of the related diseases and pandemic.

First, making use of the influence of celebrities and dramas, plots of short films or soap operas could serve as the medium to correct misinformation and send the right messages to the public. Second, governments are suggested to legislate laws to restrain the generation of misinformation and to sponsor media makers to correct it. As for education institutions, instructors should not only teach knowledge in textbooks but also how to differentiate skeptical information from trust-worthy ones. Last but not least, as medical students, we could work together with students professional in computer science to establish a system, combining the AI technology to classify health related information into different categories and popping up a window to inform Internet users whether the website now visiting is credible or not.

Hopefully, by implementing the actions mentioned above, the influence of health misinformation could be deduced to a minimal degree and assist the public to make right health decisions, thus improving the health welfare of the entire human race.