

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND HEALTH CARE: A CASE STUDY OF DELHI****Poonam Gupta¹, Ph. D. & Mr. Amit Kumar²**¹Associate Professor, Dyal Singh Evening College, Delhi University²Assistant Professor, Dyal Singh Evening College, Delhi University**Abstract**

Social media has integrated itself into everyday life of people across the globe. A paradigm shift has occurred in communication and knowledge sharing due to social media networks. A vast amount of rapid information is available on various topics and issues on social media. Health care is one of them. The possibility of creating and sharing content and videos, creating groups for discussions, and connecting with people has large implication for the dissemination of health care information and support. The speed and scale of adoption of social media is changing the way health care is sought today. The present study is an attempt to study the frequency and use of social media by people of Delhi for health care. It is found that more than eighty-five percentage of respondent go to social media at least once in a day. The most popular social media platforms among people are Face Book and YouTube followed by twitter. It is seen that people of Delhi like to use social media to seek health information about a disease, to look for health and diet tips. They also like to search answers for their health-related questions on social media. Further, they like to share their health experiences with others and look for patients' review of hospitals and doctors. They participate in the promotion activities of the health providers too. However, seeking emotional support and direct interaction with the doctors on social media platforms are not yet popular among Delhi people. Time has arrived for health care providers to tap the boom of social media in their favour by using a prudent social media policy leading to patient education and empowerment.

Key words: Social Media, Health Care, Delhi, Face Book, You Tube, Twitter, Purposes, Health Providers



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Introduction

New digital technologies have revolution the arena of networking and communication. Social media is one such technology. Social media has created all new social environments in which interaction with others is available with a click. Social media are digital web based platforms which not only provide users' access to information but also allow them to create, edit and share content in various forms such as text, pictures audio and videos. Social media has transformed communication including health care communication.

Social media covers variety of social media platforms i.e. (i) Social networking sites such as Face Book, LinkedIn, and My Space which allows to set up profile accounts, share information, interact or comments and also to set up groups (ii) Media sharing sites such as You Tube and Flickr which allow sharing of photos and videos (iii) Blog and Micro blogs like twitter which provide opportunities for sharing updates and messages (iv) Social discussion forums such as Reedit and Quora where posts and discussion around a topic are done. Digital technologies of smart phones I-pads, tablets and laptops have facilitated easy access of social media to people.

The increasing adoption and scale of Social media platforms have changed the way patients seek and health providers deliver health care services. Social media platforms provide new avenues and forms to seek and share health information.

The present article aims to study the use of Social media platforms by Delhi people for health care purposes. The main objectives of the study are:

1. To know which social media platforms are used commonly by Delhi people.
2. To find out the frequency of visit on social media by Delhi People.
3. To understand the main purposes for which Delhi people go to social media for health -related support and communication.

Research Methodology

A survey of 254 people has been conducted in Delhi through a pre -designed questionnaire. Along with their demographical information Delhi people were asked to provide their responses about three main aspects i.e. the frequency of the use of social media platforms, type of social media platforms used, and the main health related purposes for which they use social media. Children below the age of sixteen were excluded from the study. The responses were obtained either through mail or through personal interviews.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

1. Age

People from all groups participated in the survey as shown in table 1, and figure 1

Table 1:Age of the Respondents

Age Group (in years)	Number of Respondents
16-30	88
31-50	102
51 and above	64
Total	254

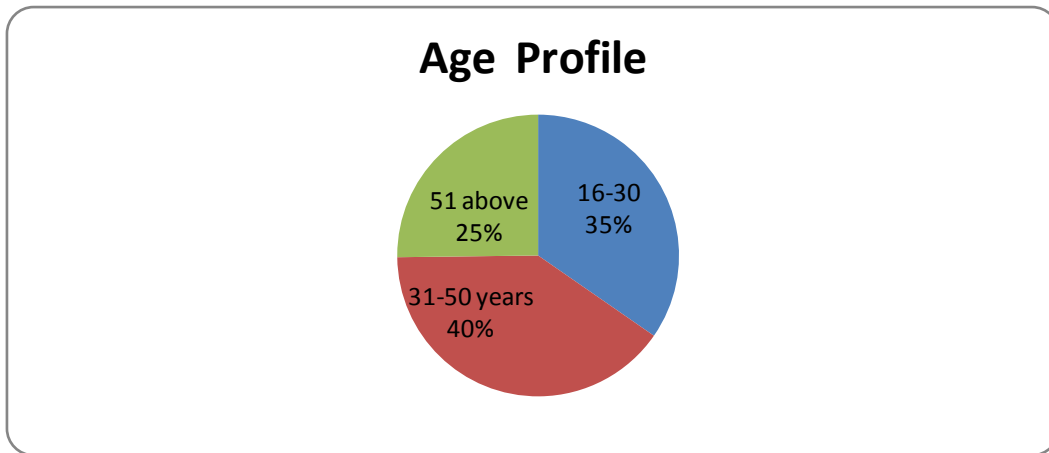


Figure1: Age Profile of the Respondents

Respondents were mainly classified into their main groups young adult (age 16-30 years), middle aged people (age 31-50 years), and old people (age 51 and above).

2. Gender

Table -2 and figure 2 show the gender wise responses

Table 2: Gender Profile of the Respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents
Male	134
Female	120
Total	254

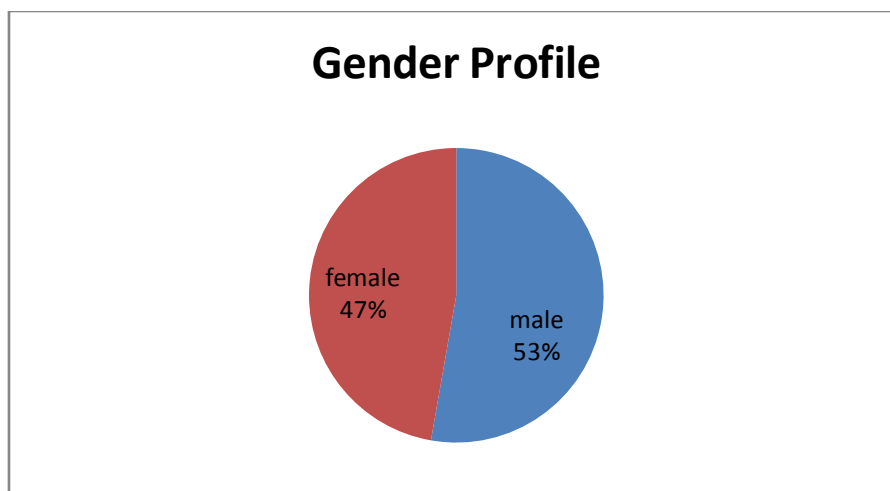


Fig 2: Gender Profile of the Respondents

There is almost equal participation from male and female respondent. 53% respondents are male and 47% are female.

3. Occupation

Occupational profile of the people surveyed is summarized in table 3 and figure 3.

Table 3:-Occupational Profile of the Respondents

Occupation	Number of Respondents
Service	76
Business	45
Professional	34
Housewife	46
Students	53
Total	254

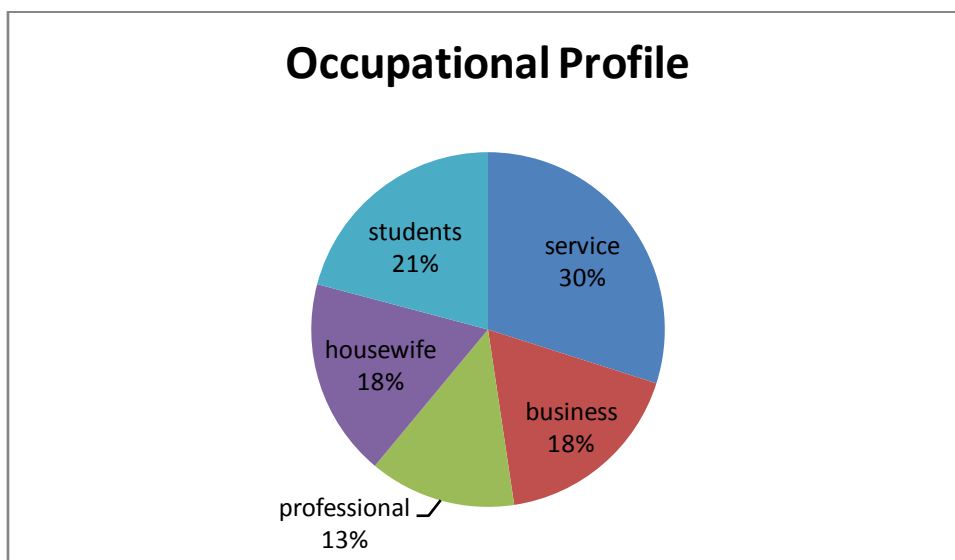


Figure 3: Occupational Profile of the Respondents

The highest 30% of the respondent are from service class followed by 21% students. 18% are housewife and people doing business are also 18%. Professionals account for 13% of the respondents.

Frequency of the Use of Social Media

Respondents were asked to mark how often they go to social media. The results of the responses are summarized in table 4 and are also depicted by figure 4.

Table 4: Frequency of the Use of Social Media

Frequency of Visit	Number of Respondents
More than once Daily	107
One Daily	114
More than once in week	27
Once in week	4
only occasionally	2
Total	254

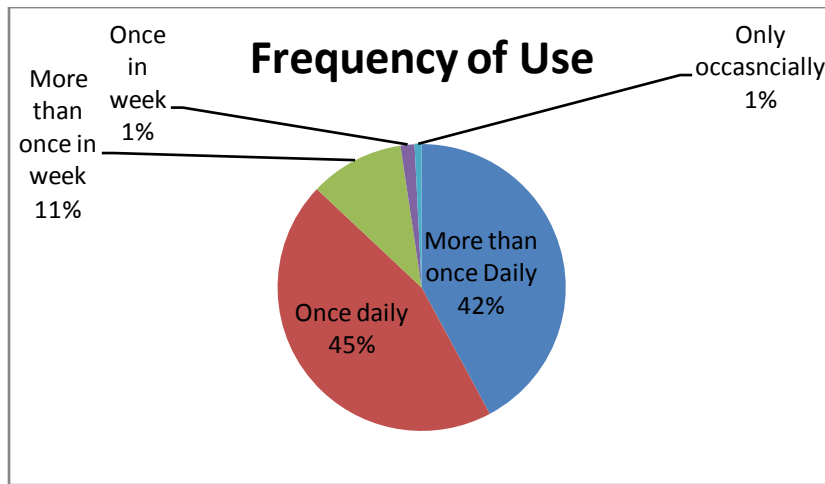


Figure 4: Frequency of the Use of Social Media

221 respondents out of 254 reported that they go to social media daily. It clearly shows that social media has become indispensable part of the daily lives of people of Delhi.

Social Media Platforms Used

Table 5 and figure 5 show the popularity of various social media platform among people of Delhi.

Table 5: Social Media Platforms Used

Social Media Platforms	Number of Respondents	% of the Total Respondents
Facebook	184	72%
Twitter	102	40%
YouTube	162	63%
LinkedIn	55	22%
Google Plus	54	21%
Blogs	32	13%

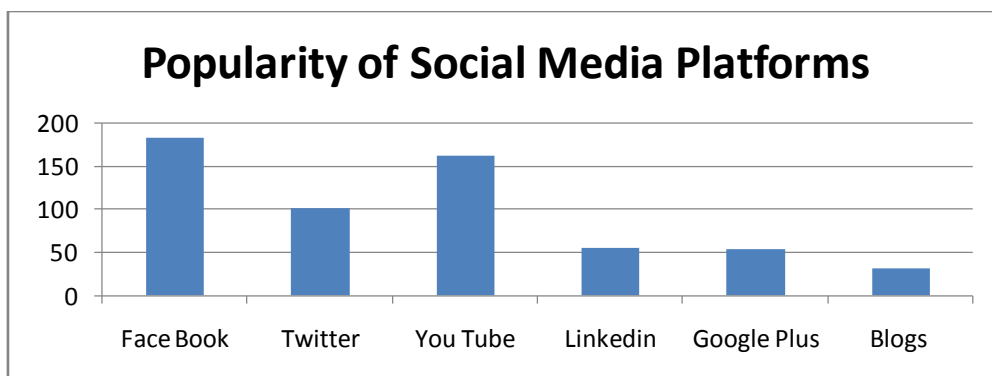


Figure 5: Popularity of Social Media Platforms

Table 5 shows that Face Book and YouTube are two most popular social media platforms used by people of Delhi. YouTube 28%, face Book 31%, twitter 17% and google plus, LinkedIn 9%

In table 5 clearly shows that face Book YouTube are two most popular social media platforms used by people of Delhi. 72% of the respondents have their Face Book accounts and 63% are going to You Tube for watching videos and media sharing. 22% of the respondents are on LinkedIn and 21% are using google plus too. This shows social media is penetrating the lives of people. Today social media is influencing lives of people in various aspects of their lives including health care.

Use of Social Media for Health Care

Respondents were also asked that whether they go to social media for health communications and support. 207 out of 254 Respondent replied positively i.e. 81% of the respondents are using social media for health care information and support.

Purposes of the Use of Social Media for Health Care

The respondents were asked to provide their Yes or No on fourteen purposes of the use of social media in health care. The responses of the patients are documented in table 6 and depicted in figure 6.

Table 6: Purposes of the Use of Social Media for Health Care

S.No	Purpose of the Social Media Use for Health Care	Number of Yes By the Respondents	% of the Total (207)
1	To get information on a disease	115	55.5%
2	To receive answers to health questions	88	42.5%
3	To report ailment& seek solutions	49	23.6%
4	To look for health and diet tips	124	59.8%
5	To interact with other patients and know their experiences	51	24.6%
6	To share information about health experiences	59	28.5%
7	To seek second opinions	53	25.6%
8	To seek alternative solution to a medical problem	55	26.5%
9	To seek emotional support	22	10.6%
10	To interact with a doctor	35	16.9%
11	To study patients' review of doctors/hospitals	66	31.9%
12	To rate doctors/hospitals	36	17.4%
13	To participate in promotion activities and schemes	62	29.9%
14	To get information on currently prevailing diseases like dengue	51	24.6%

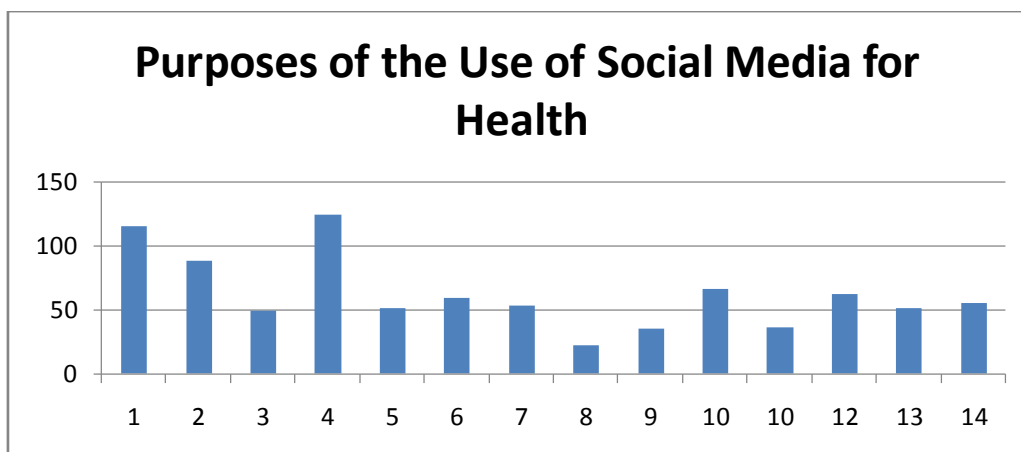


Figure 6: Purposes of the Use of Social Media for Health

The three main reasons of the use of various social media platform for health care are turned out to be (i) looking for health and diet tips (59.8%) (ii) getting information about a disease (55.5%) and (iii) to receive answers to health questions (42.5%). Respondent in Delhi have also looked for patients review of doctors’ hospitals (31.6%). However, only 17.4% reported that they like to rate doctors/ hospitals on social media.

Next important health related activities for which people of Delhi go to social media is participation in the promotional activities of the health providers (29.9%). They also like to share information about their health experiences (28.8%)

Almost one fourth of the respondents have reported that they like to (i) report their ailment and seek solutions (23.6%),(ii) interact with other patients and know their experiences(24.6%) (iii) seek second opinions(25.6%) (iv) get information on currently prevailing diseases like dengue (24.6%)(v)seek alternative solution to a medical problem(26.5%). However, very few respondents are found to be interacting with doctors (16.9%) and look for emotional support (10.6%) on social media.

It can be easily inferred from the above results that people of Delhi have high hopes from social media platforms and they are seeking varied type of health information and support on social media. However, at present respondents are found to be using social media more for receiving or seeking information. Health related social interactions with others are still limited.

Implication for the Health Providers

The rapid rise in the number of social media platforms and volume of registrations on them have made it very clear that social media is here to stay. The use of social media for health care will rise in future and patients would like to depend on social media to educate themselves, know the options available, evaluate them, support each other and so on. will be

more aware about the quality of care. It will surely increase the expectations of the patients from the health services providers/providers they will be more informed and aware.

Therefore, now it is time that healthcare organizations must understand the role of social media and use it as a business opportunity. Organizations should establish a well -defined social media policy to connect with people, to promote right food and diet habits, for better health delivery to the patients, and for quick and informed actions.

However, the use of social media in health care has its own pit falls. Many studies have reported risk of misinformation, privacy breach, and safety for patients. Further, professional and hospitals run the risk of damage to the image, violation of patients' privacy, loss of license, and legal issues. Therefore, proper social media guidelines and regulations are the need of the hour. The users of health information should also be educated and made aware the need of critically reviewing information received from social media before applying it for health reasons.

Concluding Observation

The present study has tried to study how frequently and for which health purposes people in Delhi are using social media platforms. It is seen that Face Book, YouTube and Twitter are three platforms largely used by people of Delhi. They go to social media daily. They look for information on various health and medical issues. No doubt, social media has a vast potential to be used for health education and patient empowerment. Health providers need to strive for providing value added services at lower costs. They need to organize activities to connect with the people and create a positive image.

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