

Who is learning about “clean eating” diets or learning from nutrition professionals on social media?

Klassen, K.¹, Adamski, M.M.¹, Brennan, L.², Reid, M.², Lim, M.³, McCaffrey, T.A.^{1*}, Truby, H.¹

¹ Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, ² RMIT University, Melbourne, ³ Burnet Institute, Melbourne. *presenting author

INTRODUCTION

- There has been growing concern about the use of social media (SM) to promote non-evidence based diet trends like 'clean eating' in place of qualified nutrition advice (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017).
- Online users search for information within their social network and may find supporting 'evidence' that is contrary to scientific research advice (Jenkins et al., 2010).
- Source credibility is very important in the age of social media (Hilverda, Kuttschreuter, & Giebels, 2017).

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To explore the characteristics of individuals using SM to learn about nutrition-related topics.
- To compare and contrast these characteristics between two distinct topics: 1) learning about clean-eating or detox diets (CEDD) and 2) from nutrition professionals (NP).

METHODOLOGY

- A free 3-week online course “Food as Medicine” was run by the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food at Monash University; the course was hosted by FutureLearn.
- Multivariable logistic regression models were constructed to evaluate the characteristics associated with learning from social media: 1) about CEDD and 2) from NP, with significance set at P<0.05

Table 1: Multivariable logistic regression

	Clean-Eating or Detox Diets			Nutrition Professionals		
	OR	95% CI	P value	OR	95% CI	P value
Age	0.970	(0.95, 0.98)	<0.001	0.97	(0.96, 0.99)	<0.001
Trust-SM posts by friends*	1.320	(1.02, 1.71)	0.035	-	-	-
SM-Facebook**	2.420	(1.36, 4.31)	0.003	1.96	(1.17, 3.28)	0.011
SM-Pinterest	1.630	(1.06, 2.5)	0.026	1.54	(1.02, 2.34)	0.041
SM-Google	1.850	(1.21, 2.83)	0.005	2.41	(1.59, 3.64)	<0.001
Trust-Bloggers	1.240	(1.01, 1.52)	0.038	1.28	(1.05, 1.57)	0.015
Pay attn which of my posts receives more likes	1.160	(0.99, 1.37)	0.076	-	-	-
Read posts of strangers more often than those of my friends	1.340	(1.09, 1.66)	0.006	-	-	-
Trust-other HCP -Nurses Physio	0.640	(0.52, 0.79)	<0.001	-	-	-
Trust-GP	-	-	-	1.17	(0.98, 1.39)	0.084
SM-YouTube	-	-	-	1.56	(1, 2.44)	0.05
TRUST-MEDIA				0.71	(0.56, 0.9)	0.004

*Trust – do you trust information posted on social media by friends?

**SM- whether they used social media channels Facebook, Pinterest, Google or YouTube

RESULTS

- n=1005 learners from 70 countries completed the survey; mean age was 50 years (SD 15).
- CEDD information-seeking was negatively associated with trusting information from healthcare professionals OR 0.64 (95%CI 0.52 to 0.79).
- CEDD information-seeking was positively associated with trusting social media posts by friends OR 1.3 (95%CI 1.02 to 1.71), and reading social media posts of strangers more than friends OR 1.34 (95%CI 1.09 to 1.66).
- Information-seeking from a NP was negatively associated with trusting media OR 0.70 (95%CI 0.56 to 0.90) and age.

- Information-seeking from a NP was positively associated with use of the social media channels: Facebook, Pinterest, Google and YouTube, as well as trusting bloggers (OR1.28 (95%CI 1.05 to 1.57)).

CONCLUSION

- There were differences between people accessing information about clean-eating or detox diets or from nutrition professionals, including trusting various information sources and social media user profiles.
- Nutrition professionals should try to understand the different user profiles to ensure public health nutrition messages are effectively targeted.

