

# Dissemination of Knowledge on Nutrition, Obesity and Diabetes Using Social / Mass Media

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**Abstract—** Social media are commonly used by the public for understanding / exchanging health related information. Objective: To disseminate the knowledge on nutrition, obesity and diabetes using social / mass media for prophylaxis and control of diabetes mellitus. Materials & Methods: Education material on Nutrition, Obesity and Diabetes was prepared with suitable illustrations in both English and vernacular language (Tamil) using PowerPoint slides. Audio was recorded separately in both the languages and merged with the appropriate slides. The prepared material was uploaded in the YouTube. The dissemination was carried out through “WhatsApp” and “Facebook”. An article on ‘Diabetes and its Management’ was prepared in vernacular language (Tamil) and published in *Kalaikathir* (A vernacular science monthly magazine). Results: The information conveyed through the above media was well received. The feedbacks on viewing the session through WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube were good. The publication in vernacular language in the Science magazine “*Kalaikathir*” was also well appreciated by the readers.

**Index Terms—** Diabetes, Social media, Mass media, Nutrition, Obesity.

## INTRODUCTION

Social media (SM) are now providing a space to discuss medical conditions outside of the healthcare provider’s office. Patients and their families use SM technologies to share their experiences and their findings and educate others with similar conditions. They repackage the information they find for others, creating forums for knowledge discovery and discussion. As an example, approximately two thirds of posts in Facebook communities dedicated to diabetes include unsolicited sharing of diabetes

management strategies and over 13% of posts provide feedback for information requested by other users (Singh *et al.*, 2016).

Randeree (2009) and Vance *et al.* (2009) stated that social media provides a forum for reporting personal experiences, asking questions, and receiving direct feedback from people living with a disease. Support groups have also found a new platform for patients and family caregivers to share their experiences, seek online counseling and connect with others.

In Tonga, a mass (social) marketing campaign (*Ma’alahi* Youth Project) was implemented as part of the “Pacific Obesity Prevention in Communities project” between 2005 and 2008 by Fotu *et al.* (2011). It was reported to involve healthy eating messages in advertisements, jingles, interviews, banners, T – shirts, newspaper, TV and radio targeted specifically for adolescents in select villages and schools.

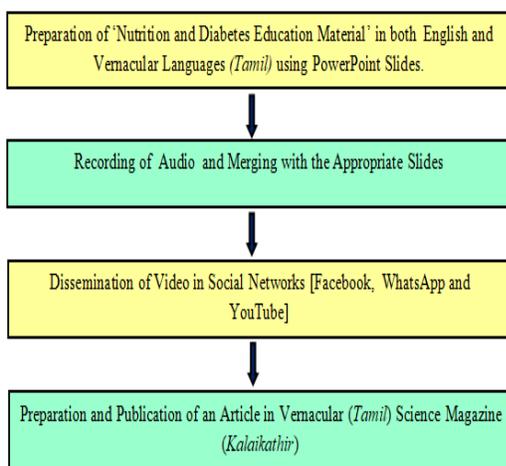
In New Caledonia, a health agency developed a television program to promote healthy eating and physical activity as part of their “*Manger mieux Bouger plus*” (Eat Well - Move More) public awareness campaign (Hawkes, 2013). The program, broadcast in 2011, featured families filmed once a month for six months who had been provided with nutrition education. Each program assessed the successes and challenges of the families in losing weight and adopting healthier lifestyles. In 2008, the International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA) pledged to “promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles” and “raise awareness on balanced diets and increased levels of physical activity” (Hawkes, 2013). Social media channels are being used more and more by people with diabetes for exchanging health information, experiences with their chronic

condition, and asking and giving advice to their peers (Hernandez, 2015). The present study aims at disseminating the knowledge on Nutrition, Obesity and Diabetes using social / mass media for prophylaxis and control of diabetes mellitus.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### STUDY DESIGN (AIM: DISSEMINATION / CREATION OF AWARENESS)

Dissemination of Knowledge on Nutrition, Obesity and Diabetes through Social / Mass Media



Use of Social / Mass Media – WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube

Education material on Nutrition and Diabetes was prepared with suitable illustrations in both English and vernacular language (*Tamil*) using PowerPoint slides. Audio was recorded separately in both the languages and merged with the appropriate slides. The prepared material was uploaded in the YouTube. The links are given below: 1) English - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9I8KwCvoCQ&t=259s>(Sathaiah, S., 2016, March 15).

2) *Tamil*-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOchqN1S1rU&t=13s> (Sathaiah, S., 2016, March 07)].

The dissemination was carried out through “WhatsApp” and “Facebook”.

An article on ‘Diabetes and its Management’ was prepared in vernacular language (*Tamil*) and published in *Kalaikathir* (A vernacular science monthly magazine).

## RESULTS

### OUTCOME OF DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE ON NUTRITION, OBESITY AND DIABETES THROUGH SOCIAL / MASS MEDIA

The dissemination of the knowledge on nutrition, obesity and diabetes through mass media (Vernacular Science magazine, *Kalaikathir*) and social media (WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook) were well received. The feedbacks on seeing Nutrition and Diabetes session through WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube were good. The publication in vernacular language in the Science magazine “*Kalaikathir*” was well appreciated by the readers.

Nowadays, social media has been the important part of one’s life (shopping, electronic mails, education, business etc.). Social media plays a vital role in transforming people’s lifestyle. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. Since the emergence of these social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook as key tools for news, journalists and their organizations have performed a high-wire act. Accessing these sites has become a day to day routine for the people. Social media has been mainly defined to refer to “the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that facilitate anyone to publish and access information collaborate on a common effort, or build relationship” (Siddiqui and Singh, 2016).

Due to the far-reaching presence and ease of use of mobile phones and social media, many researchers and health care providers are encouraging the use of mobile phones in the Middle East to better educate patients on how to manage their diseases. Previously, several studies had shown the benefits of using social media campaigns to educate patients about diabetes, obesity, antibiotic use etc., For health promotion advocates, social media presents a platform that is highly cost efficient and delivers mass education that ultimately is responsible for lowering the burden on regional health care systems. From the users’ perspective, social media platforms have several benefits, such as making open access information available, providing the option for dynamic conversations in a group, and keeping users connected with their topic of interest (Alanzi, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Social media are widely accessed by majority of the people globally to gather information of all kinds. Qualified nutritionists can make use of this platform for dissemination of authentic nutrition related information in order to improve the food habits and health of mankind and for prophylaxis of various malnutrition related disorders.

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