Evaluating Sexual Health Through Online Surveys: Social Media Platforms That "Work" in Engaging Urban Youth

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Purpose: Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, which all have millions of users who interact and communicate every day, have been effective in sexual health interventions and the spread of reproductive health education. They have also been shown to be useful in health promotion and have been used to track several key metrics (e.g., comments and posts) among users of all demographics. However, there is a lack of research on their impact and reach as a community-based tool for disseminating sexual health information and increasing engagement among Black adolescents and young adults (AYA), a targeted high-risk population. Thus the purpose of the study was to determine which social media platforms and banner advertisements affected engagement among adolescent and young adult Black males when participating in online surveys.

Methods: Project Black Male Opinions on... (BMO), an online survey was conducted from March 2019 to July 2019 to assess sexual health preferences among a convenience sample of adolescent and young adult males (AYA) ages 18–24 (N = 170). Social media metrics from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were monitored. This cross-sectional survey comprised several categories, including basic personal information, drug-related risk behaviors, healthcare, sexual reproductive health questions; theory of planned behavior constructs (attitudes, norms, and perceived control), mental health and violence-related risk behaviors, and social media preferences.

Results: Black Male Opinion (BMO) social media advertisements reached approximately 146,412 individuals. Our primary finding for online survey engagement was referral (e.g., group chat, and indirect social media sharing) served as the greatest percentage of recruitment with Twitter and YouTube as preferred sites to receive sexual health information.

Conclusion: Recognizing the variety of technologies being used among this population can help the community, researchers, and healthcare providers understand how they engage online. It may also promote culturally sensitive, customized marketing on sexual health information from a regional and national perspective for this population.
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Keywords:
Social media, sexual health and urban youth

Abstract Summary:
Social media platforms have been effective in sexual health interventions and the spread of reproductive health education. However, there is a lack of research on their impact on Black youth. This study highlights social media platforms and banner advertisements that affect online engagement for sexual health among this demographic.

References:

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Author Summary: Dr. Burns has 10+ years’ experience working as both a clinician and nurse scientist in urban settings and is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan
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