



Media impact on health promotion

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Letter to Editor

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Dear Chief in Editor

Health and well-being is a significant and vital condition for positive living which should be improved for a better status of life, a need of human being that he is seeking. But, there are some questions, such as: how is health affected and will be improved? Would media and some tools change, improve or present a healthy lifestyle? How does media usage affect peoples' health? How would media and a healthy lifestyle get balanced and is there any relationship between them? We spend most of our time on using media, without knowing its impact on us. We also don't realize that the overuse and the miss-use of media would affect all aspects of our life negatively. In spite of the fact that media have some negative impacts and most believe in these claims, the exact opposite is true as well, however the combination of some other social and individual factors together can also affect the health of individuals and communities. So many changes can be occurred such as behavioral changes. Media can be a positive, fast and cheap way and as a means to prevent people from sickness and promote their health and well-being. However some research findings showed that using social networks like Facebook and twitter makes the people lives worse (50% of the participants). Their self-esteem was suffering when they started comparing themselves and their accomplishments to those of others and 66% claimed that it was

difficult for them to relax or sleep after spending time on media. Like any other types of media, social networks and media are not inherently good or bad, but their impact depends on the type and the frequency of their usage by human being [1].

The studies demonstrate that excessive usage of mobile phones, social and mass media and internet, as a media, can be associated with different aspects or problems of mental health. For example, prior studies indicated that mobile phone addiction could be related to impulsivity and addiction, low self-esteem and depression, control problems and the symptoms of depression, anxiety, internet addiction, lower self-confidence, high impulsivity, feeling of

loneliness, social anxiety, extroversion, self-esteem, depression, distractibility, lack of tolerance, withdrawal, escape, impulsivity, loneliness and negative consequences such as emotionally-damaged relationships and also reduction of academic achievement, family relationship decrease, social isolation, loneliness and depression [2]. Researches also indicated that "the frequent use of internet has caused a lot of psychological and mental disorders like anxiety, depression, stress and obsessive compulsive disorder" [3-5].

Today considering the positive impacts of available Media and technology such as internet and mobile, we can point to SMS ability on mobile as an example for diabetic

patients to be aware and informed from the disease and control it easily and cheaply through E-mail as another choice of media [4]. So researchers found a simple and low cost way to improve public health and the quality of life so social media quickly became a powerful tool in delivering health promotion, especially through increasing peoples' knowledge.

According to some other research findings, most people are not aware that health and health policy are emerged from their direct experience mediated by media. Health and illness discourses are pervasive in the print media, television, cinema, and on the Internet. Media channels, including print journalism, advertisements, fiction films, television shows, documentaries, and computer technology affect the healthcare system and individuals' use of this system. Clearly, media representations of health and illness shape our experience, understandings of the illness, health, and healthcare and also influence health beliefs, health behaviors, healthcare practices, and policy-making [5].

Then, it is believed that in spite of the fact that media has somehow negative effects, but some positive impacts also can be taken out from them anyway. Now understanding the media wholly and deeply to find the way they can be used to have a positive impact on human being should be really considered by those who are responsible for the health related affairs and health policy makers in order to do their best and make the best of them in general. Further researches related to these affairs seem necessary to be conducted for better recognition in deep to make a better life and a better world for ourselves.

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