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Digital Media-Based Interventions to Promote Healthy Lifestyles and Psychological Wellbeing of Nurses in Kenya

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**Digital Media-Based Interventions to Promote
Healthy Lifestyles and Psychological Wellbeing of
Nurses in Kenya**



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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to find out the effectiveness of applying digital media tools as an intervention to enhance the availability of information and resources related to mental health care to nurses and promote a healthy lifestyle. A growing number of health care workers suffer from mental health issues and poor psychological well-being. Many workers report cases of anxiety, burnout, and depression because of poor working conditions and unfavorable environments. Protecting health and well-being of care workers through integration of interventions aimed at increasing knowledge on mental health is one of the best strategies that could yield good outcomes for care givers. Nurses spend a large proportion of their lives in hospitals, hence, a need to create a healthy and safe working environment. Investing in a culture of managing and preventing mental health issues among the nursing staff by integrating modern approaches aimed at supporting education and training on mental health and psychological wellbeing remains a key agenda for the improvement of wellbeing of nurses. Emerging digital technologies such as social media, mobile-based and web-based applications have created new ways that individuals use to interact with one another, and could be very useful in creating awareness and enhancing knowledge on mental health and wellbeing of nurses. Majority of nurses have access to smartphones, which makes it easy to access mental health care through various mobile applications.

Methodology: The study targeted nurses in Kenyan hospitals, with specific focus on public hospitals in Embu County. A quantitative research was conducted with a sample size of 100 nurses from level-4 and level-5 hospitals. 65 responses were collected.

Findings: The outcome showed that majority of nurse have active social media channels and have been using them to learn more about mental health. Also, it was found out that using social media has a major role to play in increasing awareness on mental health among nurses, and it ensures nurses embrace a healthy lifestyle.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Findings from the study are of great significance towards developing interventions and policy approaches for promoting healthy lifestyle and improving psychological wellbeing of nurses. Also, the outcome would be of help in developing policy frameworks for managing and preventing mental health among health workers.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Psychological Well-Being, Digital Media; Healthy Lifestyle*

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INTRODUCTION

A growing number of health care workers continue suffering from mental health and poor psychological well-being. Many workers report cases of anxiety, burnout, and depression because of poor working conditions and unfavorable environments. The World Health Organization (WHO) claims more than 15% of people currently in work across the world suffer from one or more forms of mental health disorders (WHO, 2022). Each and every individual has the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. According to Andersen et al. (2022), work is a factor that can protect mental health of employees. A decent work environment supports positive mental health by providing a sense of confidence, achievement and purpose, a livelihood, a platform where employees enjoy structured activities and routines, and an opportunity for positive relationship and social interaction. Decent work plays a key role in the recovery and inclusion process for individuals with mental health conditions. Additionally, a safe working environment helps minimize conflicts and tensions among employees leading to improved staff retention, high productivity, and good work performance (Zhenjing et al., 2022). On the other hand, a work environment acts as a major cause of increasing mental health problems. Lack of effective structures and norms at workplace affects the ability of employees to carry out their duties effectively, while undermining their attendance to work. Therefore, it is essential to come up with strategies and approaches for preventing work-related mental health disorders through prevention and control, and minimizing risks associated with these conditions.

Workers from different industries experience various impacts that affect their mental health and psychological wellbeing. One of the most affected industries is the healthcare sector. Staff working in hospitals have higher chances of suffering from mental health conditions because of the nature of the working environment. According to Sovold, et al. (2021), mental health conditions among health care workers are on the rise over the past few years. One of the major causes of this is the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic that resulted into many health systems being overwhelmed and overstretched beyond their limits. Health care workers experienced challenging moments dealing with large numbers of patients with high infection rates affecting their psychological and mental wellbeing. The experience from the pandemic revealed the need for healthcare organizations to be more attentive and vigilant to help overcome stress and anxiety resulting from such scenarios (Tomlin, Dalglish-Warburton, & Lamph, 2020). As such, healthcare organizations need to be well prepared to deal with situations that contribute to growing risks of mental health conditions among nurses. Nurses spend a large proportion of their lives in hospitals, hence, a need to create a healthy and safe working environment. Hospitals need to invest in a culture of managing and preventing mental health among the nursing staff by integrating modern approaches aimed at supporting education and training on mental health and psychological wellbeing.

Mental health and psychological wellbeing have been on the rise especially in third-world countries. According to Jacinto Convit World Organization (2023), mental health has been prevalent in every country across the world, but developing countries continue recording many cases. Health care workers today operate under immense pressure because of the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. The stigma associated with experiences of the pandemic, working for long shifts, and personal challenges have contributed to workers experiencing stress and depression that affects their psychological well-being. International Council of Nurses (2021)

claims health care workers are strained by huge work load and long working hours that contributes to emotional, mental, and physical drain.

The WHO calls upon implementation of initiatives to protect and promote a culture of care for supporting workers with mental health conditions. Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) term work stress as a major source of poor mental and physical health among workers. As part of their mental health initiatives, CDC aims at raising awareness regarding mental issues, eliminating barriers to accessing mental care, using community and workplace supports for care givers, and using various tools, resources, and policies to address mental health among healthcare workers (CDC, 2023). One of the main causes of growing cases of mental health conditions among nurses is the lack of awareness and programs capable of training nurses on their roles in preventing and managing mental health (WHO, 2023).

One of the best approaches of addressing mental health and psychological wellbeing of workers in the healthcare industry is through health awareness campaigns. Awareness campaigns have the potential of influencing positive health outcomes by allowing people to have a positive view of mental health and helping them share their experiences with colleagues at work (Latha et al., 2020). People have access to conventional media tools like newspapers that provide rich data that is useful for mental health awareness. Also, government programs have been implemented through media tools like televisions to help create mental awareness. Social media has emerged as one of the most unique and useful tools for creating health awareness among the people. The digital space allows people to connect with one another irrespective of the distance and helps people to share interesting and helpful information. Social media sites such as Twitter, currently X, Facebook, and Instagram create opportunities for the public to become aware of healthy behavior by allowing users access to information that could promote good mental health and psychological wellbeing (Naslund et al. 2020). Therefore, social and digital media remain powerful tools for spreading awareness and educating people about mental health.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of using digital media-based interventions to promote a healthy lifestyle and psychological well-being of nurses in Kenya. Establishing strategies for changing healthy behavior of individuals remains a major challenge for healthcare organizations today (Ghahramani et al., 2020). Hospitals have initiated numerous programs aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing of workers, but have not achieved acceptable outcomes. Social media as a popular tool for communication and education is believed to have the potential of offering opportunities to improve and promote healthy behavior among care givers. Digital technologies have been used in a wide range of initiatives to help raise awareness on such matters. According to Latha et al (2020), digital and social media platforms have progressively developed as rich source of mass communication; hence, increasing mental awareness using this tool remains a good initiative to reach a big population within a short period. Emerging digital technologies such as social media, mobile-based and web-based applications have created new ways that individuals use to interact with one another, and could be very useful in creating awareness and enhancing knowledge on mental health and wellbeing of nurses. The study was carried out in Embu level 4 and 5 hospitals with a sample size of 100 nurses. The study sought to determine how using social media tools could assist raise awareness and promote a positive mental health behavior among nurses.

Main Objective Guiding the Study

The objective of this paper was to investigate the application of digital media-based interventions in promoting healthy lifestyles and psychological wellbeing of nurses in Kenya.

The specific objectives were:

- 1) To assess the rate of social media usage among nurses
- 2) To determine contributions of digital media towards raising mental health awareness among nurses
- 3) To establish the effectiveness of social media in promoting a healthy lifestyle and psychological wellbeing of nurses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of social media as a campaign tool for promoting and creating mental wellness among people has gained much popularity today. Chatterjee et al (2021) conducted an investigation to determine the impact of digital interventions for healthy lifestyle management. The study used a systematic literature review to gather materials from scientific databases and found out digital interventions such as participant engagement, goal setting, personalized feedback, and digital literacy to have a positive impact on healthy lifestyle promotion (Chatterjee et al, 2021). The outcome from Chatterjee and colleagues' study played a vital role in identifying the impact of digital interventions on promoting healthy lifestyle and wellbeing through identifying major goals for the practice. However, the study relied on secondary data from empirical review that is not time bound. As such, this research paper used quantitative primary data collected from survey questionnaires to study the phenomenon.

Additionally, Karoline (2023) studied the role of digital interventions on the improvement of lifestyle behaviors among healthcare clinicians. The study sought to find out perceptions and experiences of healthcare clinicians in working with lifestyle behaviors, and their preferences towards adopting systemic approaches in the future. The study used semi-structured focus group interviews targeting 10 primary care clinicians in Sweden. Findings revealed a need for structured professional care and the lack of a professional practice to aid the implementation of healthy lifestyle promotion. The outcome from Karoline's study was significant in identifying barriers towards implementation of digital interventions to improve quality lifestyle among healthcare workers (Karoline, 2023). The above findings guided the research paper by researching on how digital media tools have been used to guide the professional practice through searching and learning about mental wellness among nurses. However, Karoline study was limited to studying only the working-age adults. This research paper targeted nurses from all age groups.

Theoretical Review

The study relied on the Health Belief Model (HBM). Hochbaum, Kegels, and Rosenstock came up with the HBM in 1952 with the idea of predicting a health-related behavior in terms of patterns of belief among individuals or a society (Thompson, 2007). The theory argues the individual perception, likelihood of an action, and modifying factors motivates a person's ability to undertake a healthy behavior (Jones et al, 2015). Also, three factors namely general health values, belief about the consequence of an action, and specific health beliefs determine the perception of a person to undertake a healthy behavior (McKellar & Sillence, 2020). The theory made much contribution to the study because it guided the use of social media information to promote healthy behavior among nurses by first determining their perceptions

and use of social media tools. Additionally, it assisted in identifying the level of skills, knowledge, self-efficacy and environmental support available at the hospital level to support nurses' positive behavior.

Also, the study utilized the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Albert Bandura developed the SCT in the 1986. The theorist argued that learning only occurs in a social context where a person experiences reciprocal and dynamic interaction with the immediate environment (Bandura,1986). The outcome of the interaction shapes the healthy behavior of the individual. The theory contributed to the research by presenting digital media as tools and resources for supporting healthy behavior among nurses through education, feedback from colleagues, and raising awareness about mental wellness.

METHODOLOGY

Type of Study

The data for the study was collected using a quantitative research approach. According to Creswell (2014), the quantitative research approach is used to generate an understanding and knowledge of a research problem by using numerical data. It is the best approach for determining attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of participants towards a phenomenon under investigation. Descriptive research was used to collect quantitative data. Descriptive research aims at describing, or identifying a problem. It was selected for this study because it casts light on current issues by collecting data that allows the researcher come up with a complete way of describing a situation. As such, it was useful in describing characteristics of nurses when introduced to social media tools for creating awareness about mental health. Also, Goswami (2015) claims descriptive studies only employ a number of variables but only one is required to conduct the research. The findings from the study created a scope for future studies and helped generate research questions for further studies.

Data Collection

Sample Participants

A convenience sample obtained among nurses selected from levels 4 and 5 hospitals in Embu County was used. The sample selection took place between months of August and September 2023 through a participant recruitment to identify nurses who were active on social media and shared their mental health stories with colleagues. The participation was voluntary and no gratification or reward was received upon participation in the study. Nurses who agreed to take part in the study after the recruitment process were asked to complete an online questionnaire. The study targeted 100 nurses, 50 from Embu Level 5 Hospital and 50 from level 4 Hospitals distributed across Embu County.

Research Instruments

The use and views of the social media among nurses was tested using a modified questionnaire, initially developed by Maurice Hall when he studied pharmacy students in UK. The questionnaire was validated for application in nursing research and used in this study as a reference. The questionnaire comprises of questions and statements that assist to determine social media usage among nurses. It consists of these sections: Participant demographics (5 items), use of social media (6 items), impact of social media towards raising awareness on mental health (8 items), and the effectiveness of social media in promoting good health and lifestyle (4 items) (see appendix A).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS version 25 and 3.5.1. The data was presented in the form of tables and figures to find out the relationship between variables.

FINDINGS

Characteristic of the Sample

The target sample for the study was composed of 100 participants but only 65 ($n=65$) responded to questionnaires, which represented a 65% response rate. Of the 65 respondents, 9 were male (14%), 55 were female (85%), and 1(2%) did not state their gender (see Table 1)

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Count</i>
Male	14	9
Female	85	55
Prefer not to Say	2	1
Sum	100	65

(Source: Author, 2023)

Regarding the age of nurses, the study found out majority of respondents were aged between 26 and 35 years with ($n=35$) with a percentage of 54%. Nurses aged between 18-25 represented ($n=11$), which was 17% of the sample. 36 to 45 years were ($n=14$) representing 22% of the sample, while those aged above 45 years were ($n=5$) representing 8%. (See table 2).

Table 2: Age of Participants

<i>Age</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Count</i>
18-25	17	11
26-35	54	35
36-45	22	14
Above 45	8	5
Sum	100	65

(Source: Author, 2023)

The study also found out the marital status of participants. Results revealed majority of nurses who participated were married, 34 out of 65, which represented 52% of the sample. 16 participants (25%) were not married, 7 (11%) separated, 5 (8%) were widowed, and remaining 3 that represented 5% were divorced (see table 3). All participant worked in either level 4 or level 5 hospitals in Embu County.

Table 3: Marital Status of the Sample Size

Marital Status	Percentage (%)	Count
Married	52	34
Widowed	8	5
Divorced	5	3
Separated	11	7
Never Married	25	16
Sum	100	65

(Source: Author, 2023)

On the other hand, the study sought to find out the number of years a nurse had been working at a level 4 or a level 5 hospital (see Table 4).

Table 4: Number of Years as a Nurse in Level 4 or Level 5 Hospital

No. of Years worked in Level 4 or Level 5 Hospitals	Percentage (%)	Count
0-1	17	11
1-3	40	26
3-4	38	25
More than 4	5	3
Sum	100	65

(Source: Author, 2023)

Results above showed most respondents had 1 to 3 years of experience, with a total of ($n=26$) and representing 40% of the population having worked for that long. 25 ($n=25$) of respondents had 3 to 4 years of experience representing 38%, 11 ($n=11$) 0 to 1 year 17%, and 3 respondents had more than 5 years of experience representing 5%.

The Use of Social Media

The study aimed at determining the usage of social media channels among participants. It was noted that all those who took part in the questionnaire survey had one or more active social media accounts, which was a 100% response rate ($n=65$). The mostly used social media channel was Facebook ($n=33$), followed by Instagram ($n=22$), Twitter-X ($n=7$), and YouTube ($n=3$). More than half of participants (72% claimed to have more than one active social media channels with Facebook and Instagram being the most popular (see Table 5).

In terms of the main reason for using social media, 53 ($n=53$) claimed they used it for educational/or learning purposes (83%). 55 ($n=55$) claimed to use it for professional purposes, while 41 ($n=41$) used social media for fun/entertainment. Additionally, respondents were asked to state the number of hours they spend on social media on a typical day. Most respondents spent between 1 and 3 hours per day on social media ($n=30$), followed by 3 to 5 hours ($n=19$), 30 minutes to 1 hour ($n=8$). The total responses recorded were 64 but the total number of participants was 65. Therefore, one participant did not respond to this question.

Table 5: Number of Hours Spent on Social Media per Day

<i>Time spent on social media per day</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Count</i>
<i>30 min-1hr</i>	13	8
<i>1hr – 3hrs</i>	47	30
<i>3hrs – 4hrs</i>	30	19
<i>More than 4hrs</i>	11	7
<i>Sum</i>	100	64

(Source: Author, 2023)

On the other hand, the study sought to find out how respondents used social media in terms of acquiring knowledge and learning about mental health. Most respondents (n=58) claimed to have used social media to increase their knowledge about mental health and psychological wellbeing, while (n=6) had not utilized social media for the same. 64 out of 65 participants responded. Also, 57 respondents (88%) claimed to follow social media account(s) dedicated to sharing mental health content about nursing with only 8 (12%) having no connection with any social media group about mental health (see Table 6).

Table 6: Using Social Media to Increase Knowledge on Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing

(a)

<i>Do You Use Social Media to Improve Knowledge on Mental Health?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Count</i>
YES	91%	58
NO	9%	6
Sum	100%	64

(b)

<i>Do you share dedicated mental health content on social media?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Count</i>
<i>YES</i>	88%	57
<i>NO</i>	12%	8
<i>Sum</i>	100	65

(Source: Author, 2023)

The Impact of Digital Media on Mental Health Awareness and Psychological Wellbeing of Nurses

Table 7 represents the outcome from 8 items seeking to find out the impact of social media in raising mental awareness among nurses. Table 8 shows the outcome from 5 items that sought

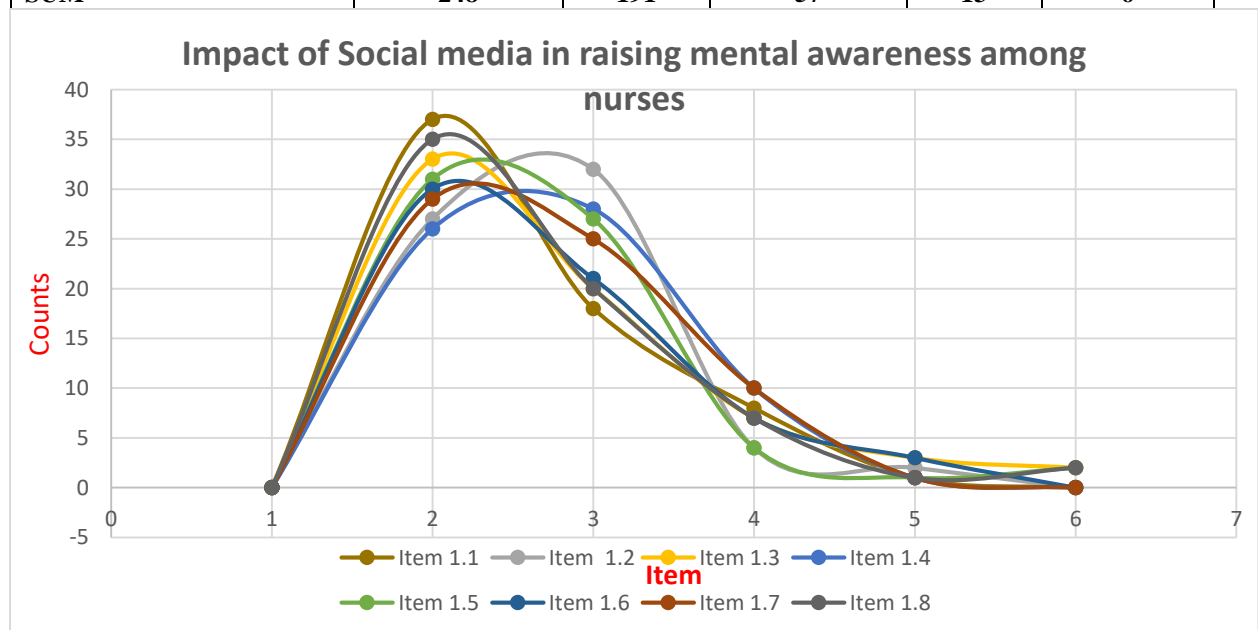
to determine the role of social media in promoting a healthy lifestyle. The shape of distribution of each item was evaluated using the kurtosis and skewness. The test statistics assist in obtaining standard errors of skewness and kurtosis.

Table 7: Impact of Social Media in Raising Mental Awareness among Nurses

Question	Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
Item 1.1	37	18	8	1	0
Item 1.2	27	32	4	2	0
Item 1.3	33	20	7	3	2
Item 1.4	26	28	10	1	0
Item 1.5	31	27	4	1	2
Item 1.6	30	21	7	3	0
Item 1.7	29	25	10	1	0
Item 1.8	35	20	7	1	2
SUM	248	191	57	13	6

Table 8: Role of Social Media in Promoting Healthy Lifestyle among Nurses

Question	Totally Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
Item 2.1	37	19	6	2	1
Item 2.2	25	31	6	2	1
Item 2.3	32	22	8	2	1
Item 2.4	27	29	7	2	0
SUM	248	191	57	13	6



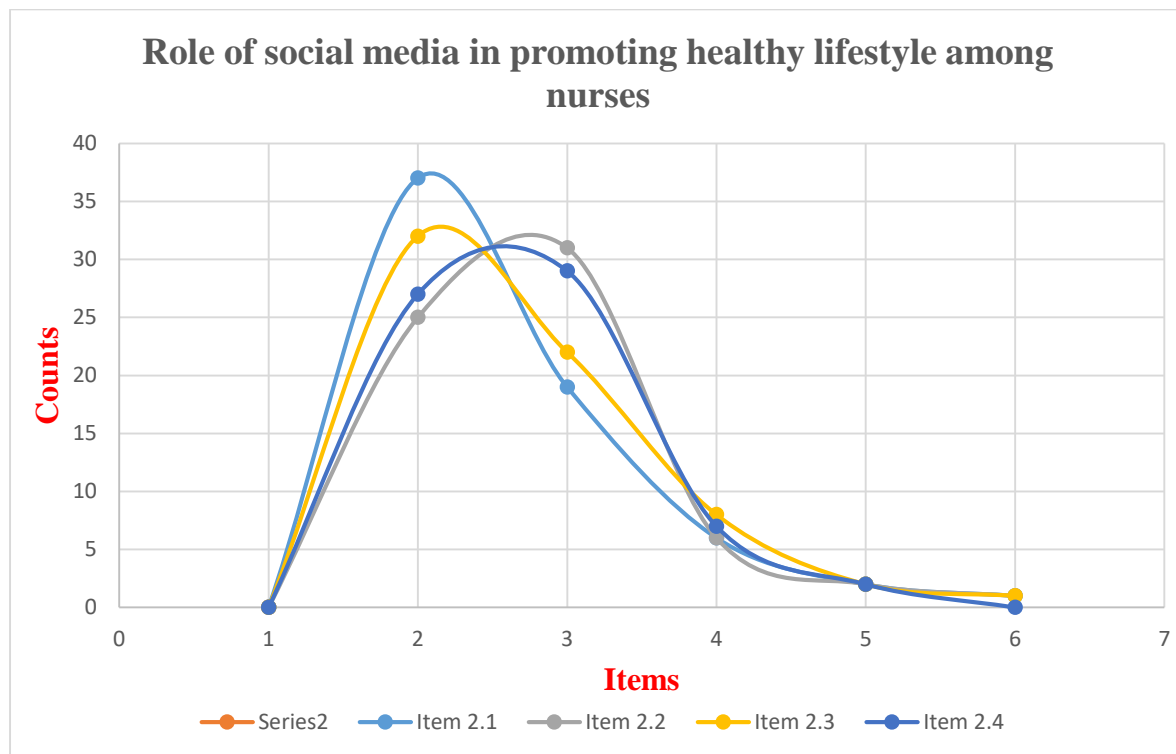


Figure 1: Skewedness versus Kurtosis

(Source: Author, 2023)

Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses from participants. The key measures used were the level of agreement or disagreement with 8 items. The outcome shows a positive skewed curve. The value of skewness of 0.623422 and kurtosis of -2.3583. The high distribution to the left showed majority of respondents had a strong belief that digital media platforms help raise awareness about mental health and psychological wellbeing.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of using digital media-based interventions to promote healthy lifestyle and psychological wellbeing of nurses. The study was guided by three objectives: to assess the rate of social media usage among nurses; to determine contributions of digital media towards raising mental health awareness among nurses, and to establish the effectiveness of social media in promoting a healthy lifestyle and psychological wellbeing of nurses. The findings were generated through a questionnaire that collected opinions and attitudes of respondents towards the use of social media and its effectiveness in mental health education.

Social Media Usage among Nurses

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the rate of social media usage among nurses. It was discovered that majority of nurses had active social media channels. The usage was distributed across all the age groups, an indication that digital media are popular platforms for communication and information sharing today. The findings adhere to Muninga et al (2020) observations that digital health services are becoming more popular in low-income countries as more people get connected to the internet and social media usage keeps on rising. The results

indicated majority of nurses are active on Facebook, followed by Instagram, Twitter-X, and then YouTube. The high rate of usage of these social media channels offer opportunities for nurses to get more enlightened about their mental health and psychological wellbeing. It was found out that more than 90% of respondents used their social media channels to learn more about their mental status including following pages and sites that offer education on the same. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) calls for the establishment of a culture of education and learning in workplaces where employees are taken through various ways of dealing with stress and anxiety. Also, the results adhere to WHO's call upon implementation of initiatives to protect and promote a culture of care for supporting workers with mental health conditions. Additionally, the study proved Bandura (1986) theoretical view that an interaction with the environment promotes a positive behavioral change. Sharing individual mental health content on social media creates a collaborative environment that offers an effective approach of ensuring the society remains aware and vigilant of their mental health and psychological wellbeing. Statistics gathered from this study revealed most participants made positive use of social media to learn about mental health and share content with others to help promote a healthy lifestyle.

Role of Social Media in Raising Mental Awareness among Nurses

The second objective of the study was to find out the role of social media towards raising mental awareness among nurses. The respondents were tested on an eight-item questionnaire aimed at finding out how the usage of social media has increased their knowledge on mental health and psychological wellbeing. The findings revealed a positive relationship between the use of social media and acquiring knowledge about mental health. Majority of participants agreed social media increased their ability to understand their mental health status while others agreed to the role of social media in motivating them to learn more about mental health (see fig. 3.2.1). Latha et al (2020) calls upon health organizations to use available techniques and tools to improve good care for both patients and nurses. Also, the study addresses gaps found in Karoline (2023) research regarding the lack of professionalism in using digital tools to promote healthy lifestyle among healthcare clinicians. The use of digital tools to educate workers about good lifestyle and behavior proved effective in addressing issues related to mental health among nurses. Also, in reference to the HBM theoretical approach, it was noted that believes and perceptions about consequences of using social media influenced nurses' ability to rely on digital media tools for education and learning about mental wellness. In this study, respondents demonstrated their willingness to learn and acquire knowledge about their mental health using available resources.

The outcome of the study also showed the importance of social media in supporting nurses with mental health issues. More than 80% of respondents agreed to have used their social media channels to acquire specific aspects of mental health, and others claimed the information they receive from social media about mental health and psychological wellbeing increases their knowledge and ability to overcome the problem. The findings agree with Latha et al (2020) observations that social media platforms have become rich sources of mass communication and effective initiatives for reaching out to a large number of users within a short period. For example, participants averred that they share the information about mental health and psychological wellbeing they get from social media with friends within same channels. Therefore, the role of social media towards increasing knowledge and awareness about mental health has been proven from the study outcome.

Impact of Social Media in Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle among Nurses

Finally, the study sought to determine the effectiveness of using social media in promoting a healthy lifestyle among nurses. A 4-item questionnaire was used to test this variable. The generated results showed majority of respondents (see figure 3.2.2) totally agreed and agreed that using social media has promoted a healthier lifestyle. It was discovered that participants believed using social media and following pages that talk about mental health creates good environment for learning more about mental health. The findings agree to Gamor et al (2023) observations that nurses have found social media as a useful resource for dissemination and reception of information. Additionally, it was discovered most respondents used social media for learning and professional purposes. As such, the use enhances professional development where nurses can easily relate to symptoms of their colleagues and apply necessary approaches to help them overcome mental health issues. Results have shown most respondents claimed to assimilate the new knowledge acquired from social media to increase their wellbeing and live a healthier lifestyle.

On the other hand, the role of social media as a tool for enhancing knowledge acquisition and learning in the future was tested. A key area of concern is whether social media could be used in developing policies and guidelines for managing mental health among healthcare workers in future. Bandura (1986) theoretical foundations revealed a new environment builds new approaches of learning and sharing knowledge by creating awareness. Findings indicated most respondents believed social media could help consolidate knowledge among professionals, which could guide new policies and laws. O'Connor (2017) found out social media can reach and engage healthcare workers in discussing policies and ensuring good continuity between practice and policy. The study outcome supported these observations because nurses responded that they could use social media as a resource for promoting a healthy lifestyle.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The outcome of the study showed a positive relationship between variables. The role of digital media platforms in promoting healthy lifestyle and psychological wellbeing of nurses was proved. It was realized that since majority of nurses have access to social media accounts, it is possible to create a culture of learning and knowledge sharing in workplaces to ensure nurses support one another and in improving their wellbeing through mental health knowledge sharing. Additionally, the study realized using social media for learning and professional purposes assists in promoting a good lifestyle among nurses. A large number of nurses use social media for learning, which creates more opportunities for raising mental health awareness through information sharing.

Recommendations

The study has come up with the following recommendations:

- (1) Future research should select a convenience sample composed of both nurses and doctors because the entire healthcare workforce is prone to challenges associated with mental health.
- (2) The instruments used in data collection showed high levels of reliability, but future studies should consider using qualitative instruments as they are more specific and can find out deeper information about respondents.

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