

Research paper

Patients' perception of Social Media Use on Health Service Delivery among Patients and Health Care Providers amidst COVID-19 in Military Hospital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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The study examined Patients' perception of social media use on health service delivery among patients, and healthcare providers in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was adopted. The population of the study consists of 133 health providers and 150 outpatients. The sample size of 97 healthcare providers and 108 patients was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1990) sample size determination table. The questionnaire items were structured into Likert four rating scale types of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics tools like frequency and percentage tables. The Findings revealed that patients perceived social media use in Military Hospital Port Harcourt enhances their timely awareness on key health tips- strongly agreed 22(40%), agreed 22(40%); provides an avenue for their involvement in decision-making regarding their health care management- agreed 21(38%); enables them to get prompt accurate information for their follow-up care- strongly agreed 16(29%) and agreed 24(44%). Conclusively, the delivery of quality health services cannot be carried out effectively and efficiently without the use of social media by patients and providers in any hospital. Despite its numerous benefits, challenges like poor network, inability to frequently update the apps, and unethical practices are always encountered when using social media. Therefore, the management of Military Hospital Port Harcourt in collaboration with the Rivers State Government should consistently be improved on network coverage, patients-healthcare providers' relationships to streamline ways of curtailing any lingering challenges in the use of social media that could affect the quality of health services in the state.

Keywords: Health Service Delivery, Impacts, Military Hospital, Patients, Providers, Social Media Use.

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INTRODUCTION

Health service delivery has been a challenge since the early man-days. In order to reduce the mortality rate, treatment, and therapeutic deficiencies, techniques have evolved drastically over the centuries from uncomplicated therapies derived from medicinal plants to hi-tech devices that can perform problematical and complicated surgeries and transplants. Research in the medical field has always been directed towards providing the most optimal and immediate treatment to the sick populace. However, enormous opportunities for more innovation and progresses in providing the best health care solutions for patients still exist (Mohapatra, Kumar & Mohapatra, 2018).

For healthcare providers to deliver quality health care services that will meet patients' aspirations and satisfactions, accurate information has to be created and shared among different health care providers and between them and patients/caregivers using a different approved medium which social media is not an exception. The term social media evolved from web 2.0, and it refers to any website or application that facilitates the users to create and share content or information or ideas through virtual communication and networking. Perrine (2015) opined that the number of social media users increases year by year with 90% of social media users being within the age group of 18–29 years, though people aged 65 years and above also use social media. Social media as a part of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is computer-mediated technology that facilitates the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and another form of expression via virtual communities and networks.

Thielst (2011) averred that Facebook, Foursquare, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Viber, My Space, and blogs are amongst the various types of social media used in the delivery of health services in hospitals to patients. Modahl, Tompsett and Moorhead (2012) posited that social media create an opportunity for patient participation in health issues interaction that extends beyond the reach of the hospital or the local clinic. These resources can aid in empowering and uplifting patients' awareness in health and related health matters when they read the experiences of other patients. More so, some health care providers believe that social media can be beneficial for patients with cancer, chronic disease, depression, infant and maternal care, infectious disease, and prevention therapies (Househ, Borycki, & Kushniruk, 2014)

Statement of the Problem

Though many health care providers have been working assiduously to effectively utilize social media to engage patients, clients, and other stakeholders through effective communication and promoting approaches the impacts of social media use in the delivery of health services seem not to be widely known. In developed countries, some health organizations have been able to move away from traditional advertising techniques to the use of the internet to connect with clients, patients, and caregivers in the health care field. In the same vein, a number of patients also have the propensity to seek information via social media in order to select doctors, specialists, and hospitals to make informed decisions on the best practices to get health care needs.

Similarly, in developed countries, some patients do rely on information found online and use the internet to gather health care information and connect with other patients to garner support and learn about related conditions to improve on their personal health care management, yet receiving accurate and prompt information for quality health service delivery still remains a challenge. Health care service provisions have always been characterized by the trust in the competence and independence of information obtained by the patient from various sources, primarily from physicians and other health care professionals (IMS Institute for Health Care Informative, 2004). Therefore, it is indispensable for health care providers to be active in using social media to provide accurate information, connect with readers and implement proactive techniques that will harness health services in tandem with patients' perceptions and satisfactions (Smailhodzic, Hooijsma, Boonstra & Langley, 2016).

Fox and Duggan (2013) posit that the health care information that patients look for on social media and on the internet differs, thus, the majority of those seeking health care information on the internet are trying to fulfill their desires, be it for information or emotional supports. Hence, the evolving nature of social media use due to the increasing access rate to the internet, the existence of affordable mobile devices, and the ease of communication at all times in proffering solutions to problems of mankind have not gotten sufficient documentation on its impacts on quality health service delivery (Eckler, Worsowicz & Rayburn, 2010). It is based on the observations and personal experiences of the researchers that this study investigated the impacts of social media use on health service delivery in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the Patients' perception of social media use on health service delivery amidst COVID-19 in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Its specific objectives include:

1. To find out patients' perception of the use of social media in health service delivery amidst COVID-19 in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. To identify health care providers' perception of social media use amidst COVID-19 in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question

1. What are patients' perceptions on social media use on health service delivery amidst COVID-19 in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What are the providers' perceptions of social media use amidst COVID-19 in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprises of one hundred and thirty-three (133) health workers and one hundred and fifty (150) outpatients receiving health services in the hospital. A multistage sampling technique was used for the study. To determine the sample size, the researchers adopted Krejcie and Morgan (1990) sample size determination table to select a sample size of ninety-seven (97) health care providers and a sample size of one hundred and eight (108) patients from the population of 150 and 133 patients and health care providers respectively for the study. The convenience sampling technique was used by the researchers to administer the research instrument to respondents at the Military Hospitals Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. A self-structured and scrutinized questionnaire titled the impacts of social media use and health service delivery in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The instrument was structured in line with the research questions, and objectives of the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of findings based on the responses of the respondent to the questionnaire administered. A total of 70 questionnaires were administered to patients out of it 55 were retrieved making 79% response rate. Similarly, 50 questionnaires were administered to health care providers and 33 correctly filed were retrieved making 66% response rate. Therefore, total of 88 questionnaires (73% response rate) was used for the analysis of the study and were presented in a descriptive statistical form (frequency and percentage tables).

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are patients' perceptions of social media use on health service delivery in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1. Patients' Responses based on their Perception on Social Media Use on Health Service Delivery Military Hospital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

S/N	Patients perception	SA 4	%	A 3	%	D 2	%	SD 1	%
1.	Social media use enhances my timely awareness of key health tips that improve my health care management in Military Hospital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.	22	40	22	40	6	11	5	9
2.	Social media use enables me to always get accurate and timely health information for my follow-up care in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria.	16	29	24	44	10	18	5	9
3.	Social media use often provides me with reliable information that creates an avenue for my involvement in decision-making regarding my health care improvement.	8	15	21	38	16	29	10	18
4.	Social media use gives prompt responses to patients' requests by health care providers.	15	27	12	22	20	36	8	15

Table 1 shows that 22(40%) of patients strongly agreed and 22(40%) agreed respectively that social media use enhances their timely awareness on key health tips that improve their health care management in Military Hospital, while 6(11%) disagreed and 5(9%) strongly disagreed to it. Similarly, 16(29%) of patients strongly agreed and 24(44%) agreed that social media use enables them to set accurate and timely health information for their follow-up care in Military Hospital, while 10(18%) disagreed and 5(9%) strongly disagreed. In addition, 8(15%) of patients strongly agreed and 21(38%) agreed that social media provide them with reliable information that creates an avenue for their involvement in decision making regarding their health care improvement, while 16(29%) disagreed and 10(18%) strongly disagreed to it. Lastly, 15(27%) of patients strongly agreed and 12(22%) agreed that social media use gives them a prompt response to requests by healthcare providers. But, 20(36%) of patients disagreed and 8(15%) strongly disagreed with it.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What are the types of social media used in the delivery of health services of patients in Military Hospital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2. Patients' Responses based on Types of Social Media Use in Delivery of Health Service to Patient in Military Hospital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

S/N	Types Of Social Media Use	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
		4		3		2		1	
1.	WhatsApp is used in the delivery of health services in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers, Nigeria.	20	36	12	22	15	27	8	15
2.	Facebook is often used for health service delivery by Health care providers in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.	31	56	17	31	7	13	-	-
3.	Twitter is often used for delivery of service by health care providers in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria?	10	18	30	55	8	14	7	13
4.	YouTube is always used to deliver patient-centered health service in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.	14	25	29	53	10	18	2	4

Table 2. shows that 31(56%) of patients strongly agreed and 17(31%) agreed that Facebook is used in the delivery of health service by health care providers in Military Hospital, while 7(13%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed that Facebook is used in the delivery of health service in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In addition, 14(25%) of patients strongly agreed and 29(53%) agreed that YouTube is used in the delivery of health services to patients. In the same vein, 10(18%) strongly agreed and 30(55%) agreed that Twitter is used in the delivery of health service to patients in the Military Hospital Port Harcourt, while 8(14%) disagreed and 7(13%) strongly disagreed respectively that twitter is used in health service delivery. Regarding the WhatsApp platform, 20(36%) of patients strongly agreed and 12(22%) agreed, but 15(27%) disagreed and 8(15%) strongly disagreed respectively in the use of it in delivering health services in Military Hospital.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in Table 1 shows patients strongly agreed value 22(40%) and agreed 22(40%) respectively which implies that social media use enhances timely awareness on key health tips that improve patients' health care management in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It also reveals 21(38%) agreed results indicated that social media often provides patients with reliable information that creates an avenue for their involvement in decision making regarding their health. In contrast, results further showed patients disagreed 20(36%) that social media gives prompt response to patient requests by health care providers in Military Hospital Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Findings from Table 2 regarding healthcare providers' perception of social media use in delivering health service to patients showed strongly agreed 12(40%), 3(10%), 9(30%), and 18(60%); and 10(33%), 21(70%), 12(40%), and 9(30%) agreed respectively. This signified that social media use enhances healthcare providers' relationships, improves specialty cares, reduces rowdiness of patients, and enables healthcare to share content or participate in social networking to improve health service delivery to patients in Military Hospital Port Harcourt. The findings are in line with Modahl, Tompsett and Moorhead (2012) study which posited that social media create an opportunity for patient participation in health issues

interaction that extends beyond the reach of the hospital or the local clinic. In accordance with Househ, Borycki, and Kushniruk, (2014), social media use can aid empowering and uplifting patients' awareness in health and related health matters when they read the experiences of other patients. More so, some health care providers believe that social media can be beneficial for patients with long-term care too.

CONCLUSION

The delivery of quality health services cannot be carried out effectively and efficiently without the use of some social media like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp by both healthcare service beneficiaries and providers in any hospital. Though, certain challenges like poor network, inability to update the apps to the current standard, and unethical practices are always encountered when using social media. Its benefits are enormous in health service delivery, therefore adequate measures for cooperation are key in using social media as tool to share information with patients and to enable healthcare providers to give prompt responses to patients' requests in military hospital Port Harcourt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be the sustenance of social media use in Military Hospital Port Harcourt in the delivery of health services. However, the management should ensure confidentiality and security of their patronage information, reducing any form of unethical practices by healthcare providers that will tarnish the image of the hospital, Rivers State, and Nigeria in general.
2. There should be up-to-date educational awareness, skills, and knowledge acquisitions of health service delivery stakeholders in Military Hospital Port Harcourt on the types of different social media use and consistent social media apps update in line with best practices.

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