Young People’s Experiences and Perceptions of YouTuber-Produced Health Content: Implications for Health Promotion

# Details

## Year

2020

## DOI

10.1177/1090198120974964

## Issued

2020

## Language

English

## Volume

48

## Issue

2

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Health Education Behavior

## Publisher

SAGE Publications

## Topics

## Sample

85 young people (13–18 years) ecruited from schools in North West England.

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

The growing diversity and uptake of social media has increased the sources of health information available to young people. YouTube is one of the most popular social media platforms for young people in the United Kingdom, and YouTubers are the most important influencers on the platform producing diverse health content. They are increasingly recognized by popular media and public health organizations as a potentially influential source of health information for young people. This study aimed to qualitatively explore young people’s experiences and perceptions of YouTuber health content. Focus groups (November 2017 to January 2018) with 85 young people (13–18 years) were recruited from schools in a single county in North West England. The findings suggest young people’s engagement with YouTuber health content is dependent on how they encounter it, YouTubers’ motivations for producing it, and the perceived relatability, sincerity, and generalization present in this content. The study confirms YouTuber health content was one of the many sources of health information used by young people and was most frequently encountered during young people’s routine viewing. Collaboration between public health organizations and YouTubers could be promising in communicating health messages to young people already engaged with these YouTubers, as part of wider campaigns or interventions. These messages could be particularly effective if they focused on experiences and norms rather than advice, remained consistent with YouTubers’ existing health content, incorporate clear indicators of accuracy into their narrative, and state their intention to benefit young people.

# Outcome

"The findings confirm YouTubers are one of
the many online and offline sources of health information
used by young people. YouTuber health content was most
frequently encountered during young people’s routine
viewing and particularly appealing to younger males due
to convenience and confidentiality." (Harris et al. 2020: 205)