Using Social Media as a Platform to Promote Nutrition Messaging of FLIP

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Abstract

Social media is an ever growing and versatile medium that presents a novel avenue for health promotion and sharing health information. Despite its growth and popularity, literature is limited on how social media can be used for health promotion interventions, particularly related to food and nutrition. The Food Literacy Intervention Program (FLIP) at the University of Alberta is an evidence-based tailored program targeted at families with children aged 3 to 5. FLIP was designed based on the results of a needs assessment to promote healthy eating in children and improve food knowledge and skills of families. In previous years, FLIP was primarily an in-person cooking class for families and children with a limited online component. Parents had expressed a desire for quick and easy access to credible online nutrition. Therefore, over the course of a 12-week MPH practicum, the online FLIP program was developed and implemented for 2019. The goal of the online program was to explore different forms of social media as a platform to reach a larger audience for the promotion of evidence-based nutrition content. Content was produced for Instagram, Facebook, and a blog, and varying strategies were used to tailor the content to each platform. Social media metrics, including reach and engagement, were captured and analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. This project contributes to the knowledge and understanding of the role of social media for promoting health messages and provides a basis upon which future projects can be created.