

# Social media strategy may increase public awareness about donor heart needs

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Using social media to deliver both emotional and concise medical content as well as the need for heart transplants and organs resulted in a higher engagement with members, according to research presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2014."

"Social media has not been used extensively in the healthcare industry, and if we can effectively bridge the gap between health education and medicine using social networks and [peer influence](#), we can potentially have many beneficial applications to the healthcare system," said Mohammad Soroya, lead author of the study.

Researchers created a paid pilot campaign that ran for seven days on Facebook, followed by peer-to-peer influencers within their respective social network delivering content to their audiences for a month. Peer influencers work through parasocial "broad" or "within" networks. Parasocial influencers have the highest engagement with their members. They can be the people you follow most, have the most in common with or those whose postings affect people within their network and those that the general public follow - such as celebrity influencers and political figures who simply have a large audience that follow them.

Click-through rates showed that engagement increased:

- 23 percent during the initial paid campaign;
- 21.1 percent with emotionally driven content;
- 33.2 percent with infographics;

- 7.6 percent with short educational videos.

"Establishing a community on a social network before tailoring content resulted in the best engagement. Content delivered by peer influencers within each outlying network was also highly effective in engaging and stimulating a dialogue and potentially improving attitudes about organ donation, Soroya said."

Provided by American Heart Association

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