

Online educational videos boost cancer knowledge

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Online health videos can be an important source of cancer education, according to Rutgers researchers. Their review, published in the *Journal of Cancer Education*, analyzed existing research to see how people

obtained their cancer knowledge and how educational videos they watched prompted a change in their behavior.

"This review demonstrates the benefit of using digital videos for [cancer health](#) education ranging from [cancer prevention](#) to treatment," said Nicholas Acuna, the paper's lead author and a recent graduate student at Rutgers School of Public Health.

Examining literature from three large health databases from PubMed, MEDLINE and PsychINFO, the researchers focused on people's cancer knowledge, their preferred method of receiving information and any changes made in behavior. They found that people who viewed online digital videos had an increase in awareness and understanding of cancer risk factors and screening procedures. They also found that YouTube was the preferred social media platform for watching these videos, over Twitter and Facebook. In addition, they noted that there was an increase in behavioral changes such as self-skin inspections and the likelihood of people seeking lung cancer screening increased after viewing online digital videos.

This review noted that while many studies examining digital [video](#) use for cancer health education demonstrated an increase in a person's cancer knowledge, potential [behavioral changes](#) and preference to digital videos, there was a lack of studies that focused on diverse populations, despite the fact that participants in several of the studies identified mostly as non-Hispanic/Caucasian.

"By increasing access to cancer information using [online platforms](#), we have the opportunity to reduce barriers related to health literacy and improve health in underserved populations," said senior study author Pamela Valera, an assistant professor at Rutgers School of Public Health and an associate member of the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

According to Valera, 87 percent of adults who access health information online use their cell phones, where social media use is also the highest. "While digital health videos addressing cancer can lead to improved health and well-being, the direction we should begin to go is to reach the needs of disadvantaged populations," she said. "Videos are an inexpensive way to deliver a clear, consistent message, and they allow viewers to proceed or re-watch at their own pace, which make them especially effective for people with low health literacy."

Valera stressed the importance of people researching the source of video education to make sure the information is coming from a reliable source.

Provided by Rutgers University

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