

'Snip-snip! Hooray!': TikTok trend dispels vasectomy myths

March 9 2023

Squeezing his eyes shut, a man breaks into song while filming himself getting a vasectomy—a TikTok trend helping dispel misinformation about the procedure whose demand has soared following US upheaval over abortion rights.

Men across the United States have chosen to get snipped since the Supreme Court scrapped the federal right to abortion when it overturned *Roe v. Wade* last June, according to multiple urologists and reproductive health experts.

Myths about vasectomy—a contraception method popularized as the "male pill"—have long flourished on the internet, fueling what experts describe as negative attitudes about the procedure that has often been used as a punchline for emasculating jokes.

Viral TikTok videos packed with buffoonery and mirth seek not only to demolish some of the myths, but to also promote the procedure as an option for men in solidarity with women robbed of basic reproductive rights.

Some men have gone as far as filming themselves, from the waist up, while undergoing the surgery.

"You're getting neutered" was the title of one such [video](#) by Las Vegas-based comedian Jimmy McMurrin, which garnered over five million views.

The common misconceptions include that vasectomy is akin to castration or that it affects the libido and hormonal production, said Texas-based influencer Keith Laue, who created multiple TikTok videos about his procedure.

"I do believe they (TikTok videos) are helping to fight the myths and misinformation around vasectomies," the 23-year-old told AFP.

"I still have testicles. Everything is normal."

'Baby factory'

The trend stands in contrast to many others on TikTok, a platform that experts say is flooded with unqualified influencers who peddle health misinformation, including vaccine and abortion-related falsehoods, often to boost engagement and views.

"Many of the recent vasectomy videos on TikTok highlight the Roe vs. Wade ruling as the impetus for the decision to get a vasectomy, and how the onus of birth control should not fall mostly on women," Katrine Wallace, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Chicago, told AFP.

There is evidence that vasectomy rates have "significantly increased" since the court ruling, urologist Marc Goldstein from the Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University told AFP.

That was echoed by several other urologists and fertility specialists contacted by AFP, with many reporting a multi-fold increase in vasectomies and a sharp spike in web traffic to pages offering information about the procedure.

Vasectomy, which prevents sperm from being released into semen,

typically takes only a few minutes.

Among the TikTok promoters of vasectomy, which experts say is less invasive and has a higher success rate than female sterilization methods like [tubal ligation](#), are women.

Many cheered their husbands after they emerged from the procedure in [viral videos](#) using titles such as "Snip-Snip! Hooray!" and "Closing the baby factory."

Also gaining some traction were educational videos by health experts who corrected wrong perceptions, including that vasectomy does not cause impotence or increase the risk of prostate cancer.

'Inaccuracies, distortions'

The trend appeared to resonate with [young people](#) inclined to use TikTok—a platform which allows users to speak directly into the camera, creating a sense of intimacy—as their primary search tool even for crucial information related to health.

"From my practice, I know that people bring information into the exam room even before they see a (health) provider," Jonas Swartz, from Duke University, told AFP.

"My concern is that the videos sometimes offer low quality health information. People should have access to accurate, evidence-based information. TikTok is not designed to filter that."

Several videos about vasectomy which otherwise relayed [accurate information](#) about the procedure, falsely asserted that it was completely reversible.

While surgical reversal can be attempted, its success depends on how much time has passed since the [vasectomy](#) and the method used for the original procedure, Wallace and other experts said.

"While I'm glad to learn about people using their TikTok following to try and fight misinformation, I'm also worried that it might have introduced more inaccuracies and distortions," Yotam Ophir, from New York's University at Buffalo, told AFP.

"TikTok audiences often confuse fame and followers with expertise. To put our hopes on TikTok mini celebrities is to assume that they know how to identify reliable information and avoid misinformation—this seems unlikely."

© 2023 AFP

Citation: 'Snip-snip! Hooray!': TikTok trend dispels vasectomy myths (2023, March 9) retrieved 23 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-03-snip-snip-hooray-tiktok-trend-dispels.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.