

Study shows how Instagram could help promote awareness of stuttering

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A study into Instagram posts about stuttering has revealed a significant gap of credible and reliable information about the speech disorder on the social media platform.

The study by Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Michigan State University in the United States explored how stuttering is defined and understood on Instagram, and how users engaged with stuttering-related content. The [study](#) was published in the *Journal of Fluency Disorders*.

The authors analyzed 74 Instagram posts with the tag #Stuttering that received high engagement, made by a mix of: speech pathologists, people who [stutter](#), a speech pathologist who stutters, a parent of a child who stutters, and news agencies or unknown accounts.

The posts were analyzed and grouped into varying themes, with one of the most prevalent themes being "positive meaning around people who stutter." The results show audiences had [positive attitudes](#) towards stuttering content and people who stutter, suggesting stuttering is acceptable by many audiences and should be seen positively.

CDU Lecturer, speech pathologist and co-author Dr. Hamid Karimi said, while these results were encouraging, the authors identified opportunities to spread [awareness](#) and correct misinformation about stuttering. The results show posts by news agencies drew the highest engagement, compared to the posts by individuals who stutter or [speech](#) pathologists, which had significantly lower engagement.

"Notably, none of the posts analyzed in this study were published by recognized and reliable stuttering-related organizations, which have a track record of significantly contributing to public awareness about stuttering," Dr. Karimi said.

The study found a trend of highly engaged-with posts using stuttering as a comic device, which could contribute to stuttering stigmas and be used to spread harmful misinformation and presentations of the [speech disorder](#).

"Such stigmas were more evident in political arguments and when stuttering was used as a comic device for entertainment," Dr. Karimi said.

"In these posts, people who stutter were presented as anxious people, less capable of performing well in more complex social roles and having ongoing challenges in different aspects of life, including their relationships with colleagues and friends."

Dr. Karimi said the study showed reputable organizations should use Instagram as a tool to spread public awareness about stuttering.

"Organizations should learn how to promote posts and how to have more of an impact on society," Dr. Karimi said.

"Promoting posts about stuttering on Instagram and other [social media platforms](#), especially on key occasions such as International Stuttering Awareness Day, could be a highly effective strategy.

"Such initiatives could counterbalance misinformation, raise public awareness about stuttering, and provide reliable resources for people who stutter and their families. This enhanced understanding of how stuttering is portrayed on social media platforms can inform and shape future outreach and awareness programs, thereby increasing their effectiveness and reach."

More information: Amir Hossein Rasoli Jokar et al, Stuttering on Instagram: What is the focus of stuttering-related Instagram posts and how do users engage with them?, *Journal of Fluency Disorders* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jfludis.2023.106021](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfludis.2023.106021)

Provided by Charles Darwin University

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