



USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SEEKING HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION AMONG CARDIAC PATIENTS.

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: The use of social media for seeking health-related information among cardiac patients has gained significant attention, particularly as digital platforms have transformed how individuals access and share health information. This article explores the multifaceted role of social media in facilitating health information seeking behavior, especially in the context of cardiovascular health. **OBJECTIVE:** Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine prevalence of use of social media in patients with ischemic heart disease who underwent intervention. **METHODS:** This study was conducted at Larkana Satellite Center of National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), Pakistan from November 2024 to April 2025. Patients who underwent cardiac Intervention within one month were enrolled in this study. Patients were interviewed regarding their Basic demographics, profession, level of education. Patients were interviewed to determine frequency of use of social media, type of social media, and duration of social media. They were also asked what type of content they seek on social media. **RESULTS:** A total of 253 patients were included in this study out of which 162(68.9%) were males and 73(31.15%) were females. 182 (77.4 %) were Sindhi speaking while remaining were siraiki, balochi, Brohi Urdu and others. 121 (51.5%) were not educated. Almost 80 (34%) used one or other form of social media. 75 (31.9%) used Facebook. 37 (15.7%) used YouTube. Among them only 7 (3%) use social media for health related material. **CONCLUSION:** social media use is common in patient with cardiac disease. But very few use this medium for seeking health related information. **KEYWORDS:** Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS), Facebook, health awareness, youtube. (PCI).

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INTRODUCTION

The use of social media for seeking health-related information among cardiac patients has become increasingly prevalent, reflecting a shift in how individuals access and engage with health information. Social media platforms serve as

valuable resources for these patients. Cardiac patients frequently utilize social media to seek experiential information, particularly regarding cardiac implantable electronic devices (CIEDs)¹. A study indicated that social media can enhance

patients' active participation in medical decision-making, with those gathering information online being more likely to engage collaboratively with healthcare. The use of social media for seeking health-related information among cardiac patients has become increasingly prevalent, reflecting a shift in how individuals access and engage with health information. Social media platforms serve as valuable resources for these patients. Cardiac patients frequently utilize social media to seek experiential information, particularly regarding cardiac implantable electronic devices (CIEDs)¹. A study indicated that social media can enhance patients' active participation in medical decision-making, with those gathering information online being more likely to engage collaboratively with healthcare providers². Social media plays a crucial role in addressing health disparities, especially among women and racial/ethnic minorities, by promoting cardiovascular health awareness and providing support networks³. It empowers patients by facilitating access to educational resources and community support, which can be particularly beneficial in underrepresented populations⁴. Despite the benefits, there are risks associated with self-treatment based on social media information, as the credibility of sources can vary significantly⁵. While social media offers significant advantages for cardiac patients in seeking health information, it is essential to remain cautious about the quality of information and the potential for self-treatment without professional guidance.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was a Descriptive cross-sectional study Conducted at Department of Adult Cardiology NICVD Larkana from 1 November 2024 to 1 May 2025 [six months]. All patients visiting OPD who fulfilled inclusion criteria of confirmed IHD with angiographically confirmed disease between ages of 30 to 70 years were enrolled in this study. Patients having other serious comorbidities with poor cognitive potential

and Patients did not consented for participation in the study were excluded. Patients were interviewed to gather firsthand information on their experiences and perspectives. Data collection (surveys) included questions about the types of online resources cardiac patients currently use, the perceived helpfulness of these resources, and any barriers they may face in accessing or utilizing them. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 21.0. (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, US) was used for the analysis of data. With the assumption of normality, continuous variables are expressed as mean \pm standard deviation (SD) or median and interquartile range (IQR). Categorical response variables are expressed as percentages (%) [counts]. Chi square test was used as test of significance and p value of 0.05 was taken as significant.

RESULTS

A total of 253 patients were included in this study out of which 162(68.9%) were males and 73(31.15%) were females. 182 (77.4 %) were Sindhi speaking while remaining were siraiki, balochi, Brohi Urdu and others. 121 (51.5%) were not educated. Other educational level is mentioned in Figure 01.

Almost 80 (34%) used one or other form of social media. 75 (31.9%) used Facebook. 37 (15.7%) used YouTube. Among them only 7 (3%) use social media for health related material.

Duration/day of use of social media is mentioned in Fig no 2. What type of social media content is viewed is shown in Fig No 3. Stratification of level of education. Monthly income and occupation with respect to use of social media is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Association of gender, occupation, income and level of education with use of social media.

Variable	Using social media	Not using social Media	P Value
Gender			
Male	59	103	0.159
Female	21	52	
Occupation			
Farmer	16	51	0.061
Teacher	05	03	
Office going	06	08	
shopkeeper	04	07	
housewife	18	40	
labor	09	22	
other	22	24	
Monthly Income			
Less than 20 K	36	99	0.003
20 k to 40 K	32	45	
40 K to 1 lac	08	08	
1 lac and above	03	03	
Level of education			
Uneducated	31	91	.000
Primary	16	39	
secondary	12	16	
Intermediate	11	03	
Bachelors	04	1	
Masters	06	5	

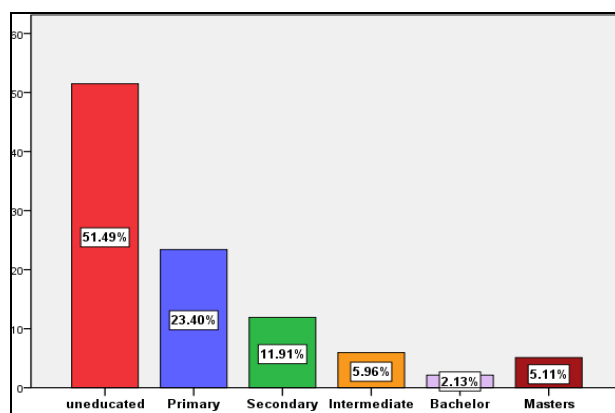


Figure 1. Level of education

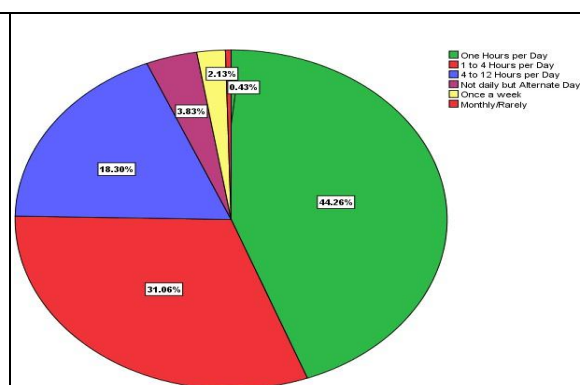


Fig 2. Frequency of use of social media

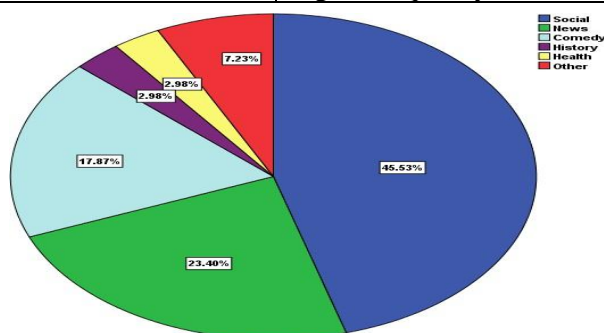


Fig 3 Frequency of social media content viewed

DISCUSSION

Our study has shown that merely 3% of our patients use social media for seeking health related information. Overall use of social media was also reduced. While our patients who used social media were male on other studs showed that mostly users were younger, and predominantly female users engaging in these platforms to explore health-related topics, symptoms, and advice⁶. Reason may be that cardiac disease are more common in males, secondly our study population was mostly rural where females are concerned with domestic chores and many don't have access to internet. Another study from urban population also showed female predominance in use of social media.⁷ One other study has mentioned that 28% of cardiac patients used social media. They concluded that despite low overall usage, 65% of social media users sought general health information, indicating potential for targeted interventions.⁸ The low engagement in social media for health information among cardiac patients suggests a need for tailored strategies to enhance digital health literacy and encourage participation⁹. Health professionals should consider integrating social media into rehabilitation programs to better meet the needs of this demographic, particularly focusing on building trust and providing reliable information¹⁰.

In another study approximately 68% of surveyed cardiac patients reported using the Internet for health-related information¹¹. The most frequently searched topics included food (48%), physical activity (35%), and medication (32%). Our study has shown that level of education is directly proportional to use of social media. While uneducated were less likely to use social media. This finding of our study is easy to explain that use of mobile phone for social media viewership often need some basic know how. This is why those who are uneducated lack the knowledge to operate android mobile phone. Same way those whose income is less than 20 k per month lack the resources to buy android phone. Secondly internet facility is paid. Less income group may find it difficult to have

paid mobile internet to view social media.

CONCLUSION

Social media use is common in patient with cardiac disease. But very few use this medium for seeking health related information.

ETHICS APPROVAL: The ERC gave ethical review approval. **IRB-34-2025/NIVCD/APPROVAL DATED: 04/04/2025.**

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: written and verbal consent was taken from subjects and next of kin.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS:

All persons who meet authorship criteria are listed as authors, and all authors certify that they have participated in the work to take public responsibility of this manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: No competing interest declared.

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