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Health Communication in the twenty-first century
- New paths in the Health Communication -

Christopher Grieben / 06.10.2011
„Health communication is a process for the development and diffusion of messages to specific audiences in order to influence their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs in favor of healthy behavioral choices“

(Smith and Hornik 1999)
Changes in public health

Demographic trends

Health awareness
Different information channels of health-related questions

- Internet
- Printmedia
- Television
- Doctors
- Friends
- Pharmacists

Krüger-Brand 2010
Do Facebook, Twitter & Co. influence our own health behavior?
Social Network Sites

• Social networking is not a program or a web site; it is a community of people who share similar interests and activities
• Positiv network effects
• Today: More than 800 million people use Facebook regularly
• Among adults in the US, 42% use social networking sites
• Among young adults (age 18-29 years), an impressive percentage of 86.

Eytan et al. 2011
Graphic: Shares of the Online Health-Surfer of the total population in selected EU countries
Development of Health Communication in the internet

1. Phase
Information platform

2. Phase
Communication platform

3. Phase
Cooperation platform
Potential and Chances

- A cheap way to promote their own company
- Networking
- Internet = Information source Nr. 1 concerning public health
- Maximum of flexibility
- Adaptation of the requirements of the customers
- Customer acquisition

Social media represent a brand new world for healthcare!
Risks

- Information overloads
- Lack of information
- Lack of quality
- Lack of personal contact
Do Facebook, Twitter & Co. influence our own health behavior?

Yes, if certain terms and conditions are given!
1. Quality of Web 2.0

- Attempt of quality management
- Quality seals: e.g. HON – Health on Net
- People have to distinguish between trusted pages/platforms and non-trusted pages
- **Precondition**: People have to be well informed about health specific topics

- The problem quality seals have to cope with, is that many people do not get to see them because by doing a research via google, people often do not get to see the main page.
2. Definition of aims

Social Media Strategie:

• You have to:
  - know your aims, and the way you want to go!
  - observe the online health care market with the help of use „Infoveillance-tools“ like [wikio.de](http://wikio.de) or [health.alltop.com](http://health.alltop.com)
3. Target group / language

- Targeted Health Communication
- Is based on characteristics of target groups
- More effective than global health communication
- First step: Analyse data of your target group:
  - Age, gender, migration, background, level of education, etc.
  - Lifestyle, interests, social situation, etc.
- Health communication programs using social media firstly have to consider certain information about the target group that help to ensure that messages reach the intended audience
4. Feedback

- Feedback has to be part of health communication in Web 2.0
- It proved that adding an interactive online community to an Internet-based walking program lead to a significant decrease in the number of participants who dropped out

„A game without any conclusion or ranking is boring as well.“  (Ron Gutman)
5. Rewardsystems

Zamzee! The more you go, the more you get!

- Compete with friends (Ranking), Giveaways, E-Cards, Go shopping
- Teens spent over 10,000 days testing Zamzee
- Using Zamzee got them moving around 30% more
Project

In progress: Sport in Town

- Unorganised and free sport around / in the region of Cologne
- Options of doing sport together (connect with each other)

- An interactive city map with (marked) locations
- A valuation system of the posted locations
- Live chat with other users
- Videoblogs
- Categories for the different types of sport with their locations and exercise tips
Summary I

• Importance of the internet as a health information source is increasing
• There is a relative growth in all age groups, especially strong among young women
• We see that the second generation of Internet health users is using the internet for more than just reading information
• Using internet (Web 2.0) as a channel, for direct communication with health professionals and peers as well
Summary II

• The topic seems to be on a good way to a sober level. Every form of hype and hysteria has been left behind.

• Especially universities have the duty to explore the basics and above all to systemize health communication for reasons of a better understanding of social media and the behavior of the people using it.