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Mapping Health Influencers on Social Media: A Bibliometric Analysis of Trends and Challenges (2010–2024)

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have become vital tools for health communication, with influencers shaping public perceptions, promoting healthy behaviours, and addressing global health challenges. **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** This bibliometric analysis examined the evolving role of health influencers between 2010 and 2024, through 516 Scopus-indexed peer-reviewed publications, comprising 479 original research articles and 37 reviews. Bibliometric measures, including citation analysis, institutional mapping, and keyword co-occurrence, were applied using Bibliometrix, Biblioshiny, and VOSviewer. **RESULTS:** The most productive year was 2024 with 92 publications (2199 citations). The United States of America (USA) contributed the most citations (49.81%), with Fishman E.K. from Johns Hopkins University as the

most prolific author. The most cited article had 602 citations (40.1 citations/year). The Journal of Medical Internet Research led in publications. Medicine accounted for 66.4% of publications. Dominant themes included misinformation, content quality, health promotion, and medical education. While USA and Canada dominate, international collaboration remains limited, highlighting underrepresentation from low- and middle-income countries. CONCLUSION: This analysis highlights the intersection of social media, health communication, and public engagement strategies. Health influencers hold potential to amplify health promotion, but issues of misinformation, ethical concerns, and unequal global participation persist. For policymakers, the findings highlight the need for regulatory frameworks to ensure content accuracy and credibility. For practitioners, the study highlights opportunities to collaborate with health influencers to promote evidence-based, culturally sensitive health messaging. Future research should broaden database coverage, evaluate health influencer's behavioural impact, and establish guidelines for ethical, evidence-based health communication. © 2026, International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

Author keywords

Attitude to Health; Bibliometrics; Communications Media; Data Visualization; Health Promotion

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Abstract

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