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Empirical Research on Health Communication of Traditional Chinese Medicine Based on New Media: A Scoping Review

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Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 08 October 2023 and was last updated on 08 October 2023.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective To summarize the distribution of empirical research on health communication of traditional Chinese medicine based on new media at home and abroad, focusing on the methods and status quo of information authenticity and reliability in order to provide ideas for the standardized development of health communication of traditional Chinese medicine on new media.

Background Health Communication emerged as a field of study in the United States during the 1970s. It was initially conceptualized by American scholar Rogers, who defined it as "any form of human communication that pertains to health, encompassing the dissemination of health-related information and the promotion of health behaviors.".

In the contemporary era of mobile Internet, new media has emerged as the predominant platform for health communication. This can be attributed to its many advantages, including rapid communication speed, extensive reach, cost-effectiveness, abundant information, diverse content, and versatile formats. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), being a significant field, has also expanded its communication channels, expanded its reach, and improved its effectiveness with the assistance of new media. However, guaranteeing the authenticity and reliability of the communication content is challenging. The inaccurate, unstructured, and unscientific content of health communication can lead to the propagation of rumors, heighten public panic, misguide public decision-making, and create potential social instability. This can have a serious impact on the effective communication of TCM. Therefore, in the era of new media, it is imperative to augment the scientific rigor and precision of communication content for TCM health communication and attention should be given to this matter.

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is a methodology that relies on empirical evidence derived from scientific research to guide and inform medical decision-making processes. It is centered around

the fundamental principle of "making decisions based on objective and scientific research findings.". Currently, there are scholars in the field of EBM who are actively engaged in integrating the dissemination of scientific knowledge with the principles of EBM. Their goal is to make reliable evidence more accessible to the general public in a popular and comprehensible manner. Nevertheless, this endeavor has primarily concentrated on the domain of modern medicine and contemporary healthcare, and no pertinent practices or research have been discovered in TCM health communication.

At present, most international studies in the realm of health communication focus on the examination and assessment of tangible medical matters, such as the doctor-patient relationship and the dissemination of medical knowledge. Owing to cultural disparities and variations in medical systems, only a limited number of foreign scholars have evaluated TCM health communication. Scholars in China have conducted an evaluation of the present condition of TCM health communication, with a primary emphasis on identifying communication hotspots, channels, and effects. They have also made efforts to propose strategies to improve the reach and impact of TCM health communication. Several scholars have also attempted to incorporate evidence-based medical thinking into health communication to assess the quality of communication content. However, these studies have not yet encompassed the content of Chinese medicine.

Therefore, this study employs a scoping review methodology to gather and analyze both domestic and international research on the health communication of TCM based on new media, focusing on whether existing studies have addressed the authenticity and reliability of the information content in TCM health communication. The goal is to introduce evidence-based medical thinking and promote the standardized and scientific development of TCM health communication based on new media through an examination of the current distribution of existing studies.

METHODS

Strategy of data synthesis #1 New Media or Jitterbug or Shutterbug or Xiaohongshu or WeChat or Weibo or Twitter or Facebook or Zhihu or Short Video or Public Website

#2 Chinese medicine or Chinese medicine or Chinese herbal medicine or acupoints or massage or acupuncture or needling or moxibustion or qigong or dietary therapy or medicinal food or folk or ethnic medicine or massage or cupping or proprietary Chinese medicine or combination of Chinese and Western medicine or compound or herbal medicine or discernment of evidence or health or healthcare or traditional medicine or medicine or health or medicine or clinical or medicine or health or disease

#3 Health Communication or Science Communication or Health Education or Medical Science or Health Science or Dissemination or Advocacy or Knowledge Translation or Transformation or Information Epidemic or Evidence or Evidence-based or Information or Advocacy

#4 survey or research or analysis or evaluation or randomised or controlled or cohort or registry or real-world or case or case or cross-sectional or questionnaire or interview or qualitative or focus group or follow-up or observation or study or mixed methods or implementation science or visualisation

Search formula = #1 and #2 and #3 and #4.

Eligibility criteria Inclusion criteria

(1) Research object: Original empirical research with primary data under the theme of new media health communication of TCM; TCM stands for all medicinal and non-medicinal traditional therapies based on TCM theories, such as Chinese medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, massage, qigong, medicinal diets, herbs, and health preservation; New Media stands for WeChat, TikTok, Weibo, Twitter, Facebook, and other globalized media platforms that provide information and services to users through digital compression and wireless network technology, using devices such as computers and mobile phones; Original research refers to original literature created or written by the author using their own research findings as the basic material.

(2) Research sources: journal papers, conference papers, and dissertations where the original text is available.

Exclusion criteria

(1) duplicate published studies; (2) informal unrelated research for which the full text is not available (e.g., journal foreword, editor-in-chief's message, conference abstracts or summaries, brochures, online news, journal advertisements, etc.).

Source of evidence screening and selection The primary author searched seven major Chinese databases and 12 English databases: China Knowledge, China University Humanities and Social Sciences Research Centre, Wipro Chinese Journal Service Platform, Wan Fang Data, Sinomed, National Philosophy and Social Sciences Research Centre, and PQDT Dissertation

Database, Wiley Online Library, Web of Science, Taylor & Francis, Springer link, Science Direct, PubMed, ProQuest, OVID, Journal Storage, FirstSearch, Embase, and EBSCO. Retrieval time is from the establishment to May 10, 2023, and there is no language limitation.

Data management The titles of all retrieved research were imported into Endnote 20 software. After utilizing Endnote 20 software for de-duplication and manual de-duplication, three professionally trained researchers reviewed the titles and abstracts of the research one by one according to the pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria for initial screening to eliminate those research that did not meet the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, the researchers downloaded and thoroughly examined the full text of the studies for re-screening. During this stage, they briefly documented the reasons for inclusion or exclusion, ultimately identifying the studies that satisfied the inclusion requirements.

Two researchers employed Microsoft Excel 2019 software to extract and code research information. The data from ten studies was initially extracted in order to identify the categorical entries and develop a structured information extraction form. The extracted content comprised three primary components: (1) basic information about the included studies; (2) the distribution of content within the included studies; (3) the evaluation of information within the included studies.

In instances where there was a discrepancy in study screening and data extraction, the decision was deliberated upon with either the third investigator or the research team.

The study employed Excel software to perform descriptive statistics and visually present the results in the form of tables, allowing for the compilation, summarization, and categorization of the included studies. The Cite Space software was utilized to convert the literature from the included studies in RefWorks format, as well as to visualize and analyze the data. The statistical results were further analyzed using a chi-square test to calculate P-values, which were then presented in a tabular format.

Language restriction None.

Country(ies) involved China.

Keywords TCM; New media; Health communication; Empirical study; Scoping review.

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