Risk Communication
The Increasing Importance of Social Media
www.tellmeproject.eu
The TELL ME Framework Model

The TELL ME Framework Model offers a multi-faceted approach. Taking into consideration technological, cultural and social development, The TELL ME Framework Model offers a new look on the inter-relationships between seven components of risk communication: public sphere, segmentation, mass media, social media, opinion leaders, appeal and stakeholders.

The objective of the model is to encourage the non-linear, multi-directional communication and show that all stakeholders are cross-connected and able to influence situations. While the same time all forms of communication outreach readers, assess and stakeholders.

Communication of risk is a critical step towards influencing public perceptions and attitudes. In the next influenza pandemic, be it now or in the future, be the virus mild or virulent, the single most important weapon against the disease.

"In the next influenza pandemic, it will be a vaccine. The second most important will be communication." - JOHN M. BARRY, 2009

European Commission funded, collaborative project that has systematically explored existing evidence to develop practical guidelines. Online tools and research outputs will be available in 2013. A major theme during this period will be communicating with communities during pandemics.

- JOHN M. BARRY, 2009

Our Background

What are the best communication strategies to maximise vaccine uptake, and to assist health professionals during the outbreak?

How can the government and other stakeholders positively influence the communication of evidence?

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Research and focus groups with HCPs across Europe and the US found that HCPs themselves felt social media should be used more widely to improve communications with the public. Many HCPs use social media to exchange clinical information, search for and discuss career opportunities, and engage in discussions on the latest health news and research. HCPs can amplify and add credibility to public health messages on social media during a crisis.

BMJ's doc2doc has over 70,000 registered users, and the French Réseau Santé Social (RSS) has over 50,000 full members. However, throughout the literature, a lack of HCP participation in planning for a pandemic and developing seasonal flu vaccination campaigns is apparent. If social media is to be adopted as a serious crisis communications tool by HCPs, Institutions need to properly quantify and integrate the value of social media as a means to spread public health messages.

In addition to HCPs, there should be a wider use of opinion leaders at a local level to disseminate health messages. From the interviews, it was evident that they are thirsty for information and cooperation with governmental authorities. Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) and Social Media

Harnessing Spokespeople
Engage with opinion leaders
Understand attitudes, issues & perceptions
Build trust & confidence
Recruit trusted spokespeople
Dispel myth & rumour
Address fears & concerns
Mediate communications through trusted sources
Evaluate response to communications
Pre-test messages with focus groups

Case study 1: Social media communication during H1N1 2009

According to the Oxford Internet Institute, the average UK user now considers the internet as their most important source for information. Confidence in the reliability of information found on the internet has also increased, making it a powerful medium that can be used to collect and disseminate information during a crisis.

HOW THE PUBLIC COMMUNICATED

• 10,000 tweets that mentioned ‘swine flu’ in the space of an hour
• Swine flu messages featured twice in Twitter’s top 10 news trends of 2009
• More than 500 Facebook groups were dedicated to H1N1, with the three largest having over 10,000 members

HOW GOVERNMENTS AND HEALTH AUTHORITIES COMMUNICATED

• Only five EU member states used social media as a tool to reach the general public
• The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) set up a dedicated Twitter account to provide information about H1N1 and posted videos on their website; however, a YouTube video from the CDC's Influenza Division received over 1.9 million views compared to the same video on the CDC site, which received only 400 views
• CDC targeted independent and influential bloggers to help spread information, created widgets and RSS feeds, and encouraged users to quote CDC tweets to promote easier, more convenient access to public health

Social media has enabled the quick and effective transmission of messages. CDC’s H1N1微博 was the first pandemic with a dedicated Twitter handle. According to the study conducted by governments, the use of new information technologies during a crisis is an essential part of strategic communication, and it is critical to understand the public’s information needs and preferences.
Ten Golden Rules of Risk Communication

1. Presence before a crisis
2. Comprehensive and flexible
3. Monitoring social media and trending topics
4. Credibility, accountability, transparency and honesty
5. Timing
6. Proactive stance
7. Appealing to health care professionals
8. Information needs of various key stakeholders
9. Online communities as resource
10. How to deal with misinformation

Each phase of a pandemic:

Outbreak communication have been identified, which are central to:

As part of the TELL ME research, good practice and key principles for communication are:

- Case study 2: How does Twitter deal with misinformation?

- Case study 3: How does Facebook deal with misinformation?
For more information on the TELL ME project or to access the guidance documents and tools, please go to www.tellmeproject.eu

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