

Healthcare social media (#HCSM): A new approach to studying and promoting health behavior

Sherry Pagoto

University of
Massachusetts

Abstract

Social media use is nearing ubiquity. Social media is not only used to connect with friends and family but it is also increasingly being used by the public to discuss healthy and unhealthy behaviors, gather and exchange health information, and create communities around a health condition or health behavior change. This provides an enormous opportunity for health behavior researchers to study health-related behavior in new ways and to deliver behavioral programming and/or public health messaging to people who need it most. In this talk I will discuss my work exploring these ideas as they pertain to obesity management and cancer prevention. The potential for social media to increase the impact of health behavior research will be discussed.

Brief profile

Dr. Pagoto is a Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. She is also a licensed clinical psychologist and co-founder of the UMass Center for mHealth and Social Media at the UMass Medical School. She is an expert in behavioral treatments for obesity and cancer prevention, both via her research and clinically. Her obesity research has focused on leveraging technology to increase the impact and reduce the cost of delivering health behavior interventions. Her cancer prevention work

has focused on using social media to disseminate health messages to individuals at risk and impacting health policy. She has 4 federally funded studies on these topics. She has had federal funding for her program of research for 14 years and has published 150 papers in peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Pagoto is also co-chair of the Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative, a national initiative promoting skin cancer prevention on college campuses. She has received several awards for her work including the UMass Medical School Women in Science and Health Achievement Award in 2015, The Obesity Society Pioneer in mHealth/eHealth Award in 2014, Society of Behavioral Medicine Early Career/Young Investigator Award in 2006, and the Western Michigan University Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011. Devoted to science communication she is a frequent contributor to US News and World Report, Psychology Today, and KevinMD.com. Her work has been featured in major news outlets including CNN, NPR, NBC News, ABC News, and Good Morning America.



Sherry Pagoto

Division of Preventive and
Behavioral Medicine, Department of
Medicine, University of
Massachusetts Medical School
Sherry.Pagoto@umassmed.edu