al. (2021) concluded that those who have physical disabilities, such as back pain or arthritis, also reported an increased feeling of overall well-being.

Good for the Planet

Offering food and beauty, gardens contribute to the environment by regulating water absorption, enhancing air circulation, and cooling through plant transpiration and shading. Furthermore, gardens provide vital habitats for wildlife and promote genetic diversity (Cabral et al., 2017).

Eating Less Meat

Good for Your Health

Growing fruits and vegetables in a garden or orchard could entice people to eat less meat. According to the American Heart Association (n.d.), compared to meat and other animal-based foods, a plant-forward diet carries less risk of developing heart disease, stroke, obesity, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, type 2 diabetes, and many cancers.

Good for the Planet

Poore and Nemecek (2018) studied greenhouse gas emissions of various food products across 38,700 farms in 119 countries. These studies considered factors such as land-use, production (fertilizers, manure), animal feed, processing, transport, and packaging. Poore and Nemecek (2018) estimated the CO2 equivalent (CO2 eq.) emissions for various commodities during their study. The results indicated beef cattle had the highest at 99.48 CO2 eq of food. Lamb/mutton was next at 39.72 CO2 eq. Root vegetables measured the lowest at 0.43 CO2 eq., and others measured 0.53 CO2 eq. per kg of product. Producing fruits tended to emit slightly more CO2 eq than vegetables but were still considerably lower than meat products. The results of this study indicate that eating a plant-forward diet produces less greenhouse gas emissions than a meat-centric diet, which increases them.

Conclusion

It is clear. What is good for your health *is* good for the planet. As nurses, we can practice these health behaviors ourselves, share them with our friends, families, and patients, and reap the rewards. Many healthy behaviors are also interventions that nurses can use to improve their health, capitalizing on the nurse's ability to multitask. Nurses *can* improve the health of the entire planet while benefiting themselves simultaneously! ■

Social Media in Healthcare: Opportunities and Obstacles

Contributing Author: Jill Byrne, PhD, RN, CNOR

The increasing prevalence of social media in healthcare has significantly changed how individuals acquire and understand health-related information. Unfortunately it also becomes a frequent source of misinformation. Within this rapidly evolving digital landscape, our comprehension of health literacy often struggles to keep pace with the immense volume of information circulating throughout society (Multas, 2024). Social media has broadened the definition of health literacy beyond simply understanding and utilizing health information and services; it now encompasses how individuals engage with health information in their daily lives (Multas, 2024). The traditional definition has expanded to include engagement with social media videos, podcasts, and influencers, thereby redefining how people experience health. Consequently, society now actively contributes to the collective construction of health knowledge, often influencing changes people make to their everyday routines. This article examines the opportunities and challenges that social media presents within the healthcare environment.

Health Information Exchange on Social Media

Social media offers a powerful opportunity for delivering health interventions, information, and education, and often provides a convenient and low-cost manner to obtain healthcare services. Personal accounts of healthcare experiences tend to attract more attention and are often seen as more engaging compared to platforms offering general health information or emotional support (Wu et al., 2024). While a wealth of general healthcare information is easily accessible online, it is important to remember that the majority of social media users are individuals without extensive healthcare backgrounds. When it comes to sharing health information, older adults show a greater tendency to engage than younger individuals, possibly due to more frequent encounters with health issues. Furthermore, men generally exhibit less willingness to participate in health information exchange compared to women (Wu et al., 2024).

Social media platforms provide a valuable space for patients with shared health conditions to connect, support each other's self-care, exchange advice, and influence each other's healthcare decisions through suggestions and recommendations. Online forums and health groups, particularly for those with chronic diseases, have emerged as communities where people share knowledge, personal experiences, and offer healthcare tips (Lin & Kishore, 2021). Healthcare professionals have also recognized the usefulness of these discussion forums for patient education and self-management of chronic conditions. By engaging with clinicians on social media, patients can enhance their ability to manage chronic illnesses and ultimately improve their health outcomes (Lin & Kishore, 2021).

Information Source Credibility and Content Reliability

The rapidly growing demand for health information raises concerns about source credibility and content reliability, yet the burden of verification rests with the user. The endless amount of available information often outweighs its quality. While social media users express a preference for identifying legitimate sources, they often do little to confirm their authenticity. Unidentified, unverified, and unregulated sources frequently spread misinformation. Without the ability to ascertain the accuracy of health information, social media users risk worsening their health conditions (Egala et al., 2024). Conversely, reliable information can reduce anxiety and psychological distress related to illness. Credible sources, marked by authorship, affiliation, current information, and disclosure, enhance perceived reliability, fostering user communication, community input, interaction, sharing, and collaboration (Egala et al., 2024).

Challenges Posed by Health Misinformation

Although social media users look for trustworthy health information, they often lack the necessary health and digital knowledge skills to decipher health misinformation. Cultural backgrounds can shape how misinformation is received, and even healthcare professionals can be susceptible. Importantly, research suggests that simply presenting facts isn't enough to counteract misinformation, making it difficult to debunk online falsehoods. Healthcare practitioners have a key role in directing patients to reliable, evidence-based healthcare information. They can encourage individuals to critically assess their information sources and provide new information with additional context, rather than just labeling their perception as incorrect (Kbaier et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The rapid growth of social media and readily available online health information offers both infinite resources and easy sharing, but the problem of misinformation could undermine the advantages for both individuals and healthcare professionals. While social media platforms ideally should ensure information accuracy, ultimately, a joint effort of healthcare leaders and government policymakers is needed to manage health information. This collaboration would foster the expansion of trustworthy sources and reliable information on social media ■.

References online:
myamericannurse.com/?p=419644

Empowering Nurses: Bridging Self-Care, Wellness, and Public Policy

Contributing Author: Katelynn Dharap, MBA, MSN, RN, NEA-BC

Over the winter months, I was worried how new administration would impact nurses and healthcare. Years ago, my therapist advised me to stop ruminating about issues in which I have no control. While I have made progress, I still occasionally find myself caught in a cycle of overthinking. This changed when I participated in ANA-Ohio's Inaugural Policy Influencer Bootcamp. The experience transformed my perspective, empowering me to take action rather than dwell on uncertainties.

At the bootcamp, I gained insights into the policy development process, learning how laws are crafted, and the critical role nurses can play in shaping policy. It became clear that many decisions affecting our profession and our patients are made without our input. These decisions go on to influence our work environment, the resources available to us, and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). Despite recognizing these issues in our daily practice, nurses often fail to advocate for necessary changes. How can we ensure our well-being if we do not champion the changes we need?

Advocating for Social Determinants of Health

Nurses have a unique perspective on SDOH because we see firsthand how factors like housing, education, and access to healthcare affect our patients. By engaging in public policy, we can advocate for changes that address these determinants, leading to healthier communities. This advocacy not only benefits patients but also impacts nurses as part of the community.

The Intersection of Public Policy and Self-Care

Nurses are at the forefront of healthcare and community wellness and our well-being is crucial for the delivery of high-quality care. Policies that support nurses' health and wellness are essential to promote opportunities for self-care and safety (ANA, n.d). For instance, mental health resources and workplace violence regulations can significantly improve nurses' work environments and overall well-being. When nurses are healthy and supported through both policy and action, we are better equipped to care for our patients.

Taking Action: From Ruminating to Advocating

The Policy Influencer Bootcamp empowered me to shift from ruminating to tak-