

What Are The Public Health Perspective Of Suicide And Social Media?

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Introduction

With the advent of the internet and electronic media devices, digital has become popular over the last 8 to 10 years. Digital content is taking up terabytes of space online and on storage devices. This data is exchanged between users through internet-enabled devices for the sake of entertainment and social interaction. The traditional means of communication have transformed into different modern means of communication. Mails are transformed into e-mailing, texting, and online chatting. TV has been transformed into online television, video-sharing websites such as YouTube, and even two-way video communication facilities such as Skype or Messenger etc. The sharing of data has become instant. Digital data is being created, controlled, and shared by persons, groups of people, corporate and even governments of different countries and states (Luxton, Jennifer, and Jonathan).

Research Questions

1. Is it appropriate to show [bullying and suicide](#) on television and social media?
2. To what extent do bullying and suicide on television and social media affect adults, youngsters, and children?
3. What is the public health perspective on suicide and social media?
4. How effective is it to change the mindsets of people?
5. What is the relationship between electronic media and the education of different norms of society?

Method

Data were collected through interviews, and five respondents were included in the process of gathering information. The respondents were selected randomly, including two teenagers, one male parent, one female, and one female who was the single parent of 2 children. The situations for each varied as they were facing different circumstances and approaching the situation in different ways. The interviews were conducted in a non-contrived setting where respondents felt comfortable and answered the questions in detail. The different approaches of each respondent toward questions enabled us to gather data that covers all aspects of the impact brought by showing bullying and suicide on electronic media.

Results

Respondents had different views on the case as they had different insights and experiences when it came to exposure to bullying suicide cases. The teenagers seemed much influenced by the suicide and harassment cases. Their answers in response to the questions showed that they are fascinated and highly influenced by these cases. They love watching such shows that develop their perception of the cases happening around them. They said that it serves as a source for them to find the solution to their worldly problems, and they learn how people get out of the problems.

However, the responses of the other three respondents were different as they were mature enough to perceive the situation in a different way. For them, exposure to suicide cases on television and other electronic media is just a source of information that helps them to perceive the problems of society. The females stated that sometimes it affects them psychologically, and they get disturbed by the uncertain behaviors of people. The most shocking response came from the mother of 2 children, who said that she received letters from the school on the exposure of children to such content. She stated that the behavior of her children was analyzed in school, and in counseling sessions, they came to know that children are exposed to suicide and bullying programs on television that are transforming their thoughts. The effects were seen in their personalities as they were getting more aggressive over small things.

On asked about the relationship between the relationship of electronic media and education, the respondents seemed to possess the same views. They were of the view that education and understanding are enhanced with exposure to electronic media in particular with the advent of social media and the internet. Things that remained covered before are now exposed and are accessible by every individual who possesses access to technology.

Discussion

Since the birth of YouTube in 2005, video sharing has become very popular all around the world. The biggest problem with videos showing suicide and self-harming is that they can promote such behaviors in people, and they will start taking such things as normal. It has come to the surface that most watched videos on YouTube are of burning, hitting, or harming oneself.

The research was conducted on the YouTube keywords self-harm and self-injury in 2009 by Lewis Et Al. The 50 most-watched videos with characters and the 50 most-watched videos with no characters were taken into account. The research revealed that the most watched videos had more than 2 million views, and there were no restrictions on watching 58% of the videos, such as age restrictions (Hawton and Kathryn 1374). The report also showed some facts about such videos during coding, which were retrievable. Forty-two of them were neutral to the matter of self-injury, 26 of them were clearly against it, 23 of them were both pro and against it with a mixed message, and 7 of them were in favor of self-injury. 65% of the videos had visual content, such as videos or photos of self-injury.

Lewis et al. are of the opinion that these unattended videos promote self-cutting and self-harming even though they are not suicidal in the communities. It may give birth to such communities that take the act of self-harming and other self-harming behaviors as normal (Hawton and Kathryn 1374).

Suicide has become a serious health issue. The suicide rate in the United States is 30000 per year, and it is 1 million per year worldwide. There is a constant debate on the issue that the internet and social media might be involved in the increasing suicide rate throughout the world. Recently, social media has been grabbing the attention of the public regarding suicide cases. The suicide case of a well-known singer lately has become one of the trending topics on social media. Researchers are puzzling over the matter of whether the internet is helping to promote or prevent suicidal behavior. It is tough to find the impact of the internet on suicidal behavior because the association between the two is complex, and no clear correlation can be determined between them. This matter has also been triggered by issues like civil rights and freedom of action and speech (Williams 35).

Researchers are also interested in finding out whether or not social media is involved in the reinforcement of suicidal behavior, whether it is a medical issue and whether it can be addressed by health approaches. This article has presented the role of social media in provoking suicidal behavior (Luxton, Jennifer, and Jonathan). The issue has been presented as a public health-related issue. It entails in detail how society can influence suicidal behavior in public. The evidence gathered will be thoroughly evaluated. It also contains information about some ways social media can positively influence such behavior. Legal issues related to the important matter of suicides have been discussed, and guidelines are proposed for future researchers. It also discussed details of presentation programs from public health.

Electronic media has a greater influence on suicide-related behavior when a specific method of committing suicide is given in detail, as pictures of the person who has committed suicide are given, or when the story of suicide is presented dramatically, such as in large headlines for the news of his death are given on media. Another thing that catches the attention of the people is when the person who has committed suicide is a celebrity. Evidence and research have shown that younger people are more likely to be influenced by the media, while evidence for the influence of media on older people is limited. Another factor that has increased media influence on people is when the deceased person shown on the media has similarity with the person who is getting influenced regarding nationality, age, or gender. Mostly, when the media talks about suicide, they make the phenomenon simpler. They usually talk about financial problems, failure in education, and relationships as the major reasons for suicide. The most common cause of suicide is a mental illness, which is more often ignored. Solving this problem is one alternative to counter the problem of increasing the number of suicides.

The National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England has stated it. There is a constant search to find out how this can be applied and whether it will be effective or not. One of the ways could be making guidelines and operation rules for the media. These will be about changing the styles of presenting news on the media in a way that drama is removed from it. Another thing is not to mention the means

used for suicide. The most important thing is that facts should be provided about the causes of suicide. Emphasis should be given to mental health issues. Right now, there is no policy on the internet regarding suicide websites (Williams 34).

One of the major disadvantages of making the policy for media is that people will think that the freedom of action and speech is being snatched from the media. First, all media should provide based on evidence. Then the news should be made by the collaboration of experts such as media experts, medical experts, and public health officers. After that, the news will be presented to the public. In Switzerland, an initiative was taken in this regard; the news was made after the collaboration of expert researchers and media experts which resulted in the reduction of sensational and dramatic news (Williams 36). However, no measures were taken to calculate the impacts of this initiative on public health and the suicide rate.

The same kind of arrangement was also initiated in Vienna, which resulted in reducing drama and sensation in the news as well as the suicide rate in Vienna also fell by a large number. Another mystery that exists here is whether the media showing positive things and relating them to suicide will reduce suicidal acts. Research should be done about this matter, but it is possible without taking the initiative. The most effective way to deal with the problem of media promoting suicide-related behavior is to add specific subjects or programs to the training of media personnel (Hawton and Kathryn, 1375). Similar arrangements should also be made for those who are already in the media line. Lastly, the important unattended issue of media unwillingly promoting suicide-related behavior should be brought to the surface. This will bring awareness to the media-related people, such as directors of the shows and scriptwriters, about the important role they hold in the cause.

Work Cited

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