

Infectious Info and Teen Health Info: Co-designed social media and online health resources for young people

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Background/Purpose:

Young people are increasingly seeking health information and advice on social media and other online spaces, yet research suggests misinformation is rife in these spaces. The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Health Literacy Project aims to improve health literacy among young people through social media and online fact sheets. Co-design is central to the project to ensure that all resources are youth-led.

Approach:

The Health Literacy team developed processes around youth engagement through consultation with campus partners, external youth organisations and focus groups with young people. A Youth Advisory Committee was assembled through a competitive selection process, responsible for selecting topics to address, shaping the style and tone of online fact sheets and helping to develop a bespoke social media channel. In addition to the Committee, a larger youth network was created, where young people connected digitally to create content and provide consultation on initiatives.

Outcomes/Impact:

Through co-design, the Health Literacy team has created a suite of online fact sheets – Teen Health Info – and an Instagram channel – Infectious Info – which provide health information directly to young people in a style and tone that resonates with them. Within months, these resources received tens of thousands of views across the RCH website and social media and are in early stages of being embedded into government websites. Many fact sheets rank on the first page of Google for relevant searches.

Innovation and Significance:

Infectious Info is the first youth-led social media channel facilitated by a children's hospital. Young people have been involved in all stages of design and delivery, including determining topics, creating and editing content, reviewing content and providing input into how the channel is promoted. This has ensured the channel remains authentically youth-driven. Evaluation of the project indicates that young people have benefitted from involvement through upskilling and connection building.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.