

Public health campaign using social media on the occasion of World Heart Day – a case study

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Introduction: Social media are used by more than half of the global population, and for most users they are the primary source of information about various events, news, phenomena, etc. This has been recognized by numerous stakeholders, including the public health sector.¹ One of the main advantages of using social media in public health campaigns is their relatively low cost for reaching a large part of the population. In addition, numerous tools are available (primarily on Meta platforms) so that specific groups can be targeted very precisely, which enables greater effectiveness of ads, especially paid ones.

Methods: This year, for the third year in a row, the Croatian Institute of Public Health has created a public health campaign on social media on the occasion of World Heart Day. The three most essential items for creating a campaign are identified before creating the campaign – target population (people over 45 years old), communication channel (primarily Facebook), and the format (simple graphics and videos). The objective of this campaign was to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the health of one's own heart and knowledge about the most common risk factors and heart diseases. The campaign took place from 19th Sep to 5th Oct 2022, and consisted of a total of 8 posts. Three posts were informative (that World Heart Day is being held), three were educational, and two were thematic videos. Five paid ads were created.

Results: All posts, except the one on which the largest ad amount was invested, achieved an above-average engagement rate. As expected, posts that were advertised achieved the highest reach and the highest absolute engagement. The results can be improved by creating interaction with users in comments.

Conclusion: Public health campaigns on social media represent a simple tool for communicating important messages with the target population. Meta platforms provide good advertising opportunities and analytical data. Although achieving good results without paid ads is difficult, they are still more affordable than traditional media. However, a lot of research is still needed in this area, especially in the context of transferring engagement into actual behavior change.²

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LITERATURE

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