Promoting preventive health behaviors through multilingual digital cancer education: Lessons from the BEAUTY programs

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ABSTRACT

Cancer education remains a sensitive topic in Malaysia, where public awareness of the disease and its symptoms is limited. The country's multicultural and multilingual population further complicates health communication, especially on less openly discussed subjects like cancer, leading to delayed diagnoses and poor health-seeking behaviors. Addressing this gap, the National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM), in partnership with the MMA Public Health Society, Asia Cancer Forum, NCD Malaysia, and supporting partner Astellas, launched the Bringing Education and Understanding To You (BEAUTY) program. This initiative produced 44 cancer-related videos distributed exclusively on YouTube in Malay, English, Mandarin, and Tamil. Each video incorporates cultural context to enhance understanding, highlighting cancer signs, symptoms, and prevention, while also addressing emotional and behavioral factors to encourage preventive action. One year post-launch, YouTube analytics were used to evaluate audience engagement and reach. Results showed that English-language videos garnered the highest viewership, with breast, cervical, and blood cancer videos leading in total views. Notably, the English video on Nasopharyngeal Cancer recorded the highest click-through rate (CTR) at 9.46%, while Malay-language videos on smoking and lung cancer followed with CTR of 4.93% and 4.79%, respectively. Tamil and Mandarin videos received the highest impressions, indicating strong visibility despite relatively lower CTRs. These insights reveal that while English content draws broad engagement, other language groups exhibit meaningful interaction, emphasizing the importance of language inclusivity in public health. The BEAUTY program demonstrates that multilingual, culturally tailored digital education can be a powerful tool and guide future communication strategies to improve cancer awareness across Malaysia's diverse population.

Keywords: Cancer education, cancer awareness, public health malaysia, multilingual health communication, digital health education