

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED
INFECTION PREVENTIVE PRACTICES AMONG UNDERGRADUATES**

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UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE B.SC(ED) DEGREE IN HEALTH
EDUCATION.**

FEBRUARY, 2025

CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned certify that this project work was carried out by **AHUEAN BLESSING EFUA** with Matriculation number of **EDU2102538** in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City and was approved adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfillment of the award of Bachelor of Science Degree in Health Education.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty because despite the difficulties in completing this project all things worked together for good through this mercies, love and grace which he showed through out the academic pursuit in the university.

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As I stand at the pinnacle of this journey, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and love for the extraordinary individuals who have shaped my path.

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to elicit the Impact of Social Media influence on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices Among Undergraduates. To achieve this, research questions were formulated during the course of the study. To explore these research questions, descriptive statistics and frequency count was used for the study and sectioned designed questions were used as the instrument for data collection.

The sample size for the study consists of 247 students from the six faculties out of the fourteen faculties. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, University of Benin.

Based on the findings, recommendations were made. There is need to examine gender and other health related factors that predict interactive media preferences.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Social Media refers to any digital application or software that allows users to engage in social interaction. It is a collection of web-based applications that allows virtual connections of users with common interests to exchange information or ideas, videos and pictures in virtual communication and networks (Mastrodicasa & Metellus 2013, Oueder and Abousaber 2018).

Drawing from this definition, El-Badawy and Hashem (2015) view social networking as an act of engagement and social media as the tool or platform used for online engagement with mass audience. According to Nwafor et al (2013), social media are internet based tools and services that allow users to engage with each other, generate content, distribute and search for information online. The uniqueness of social media lies in the characteristics of openness, user centered, conversation, immediacy, reach, ease of use, not bound by geography, interactivity, participation and variety of content format (Ekeli & Enobakhare 2013, Okeke, Nwachukwu & Ajaero 2013). Some social media platforms are Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Reddit, Snapchat and Blogs. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagrams and Whatsapp have become integral channel through which health related information is shared and consumed.

Social media has become an inseparable part of undergraduate lives with a rapid development of information and communication technology. In recent era, the utilization of social media platforms in human life has increased rapidly (Anser et al., 2020; Sugimoto et al., 2017). Social media is been used for a variety of purposes including messaging, emailing, knowledge sharing, chatting, advertising, buying and selling, booking of airlines and hotels, studying, entertainment e.t.c. Furthermore, social media has been used for academic purposes such as group project completgion, individual study, group project discussion, individual assignment completion, contacting the instructor, note sharing by undergraduates etc. Social media are highly interactive platforms enabled by the internet in which users can connect with each other, generate, modify, share and discuss contents in the form of text, audio, video or images.

Social media usage has seen a dramatic rise globally, with significant implications for communication, commerce, and societal interactions. As of 2022, approximately 4.2 billion people worldwide use social media platforms, representing over half of the global population (Kemp, 2022). In Nigeria, social media has also become pervasive, driven by increasing internet penetration and smartphone adoption. Nigeria ranks among the top countries in Africa for social media usage, with an estimated 27.4 million active social media users as of January 2022 (Statista, 2022). This number reflects the country's youthful population, where a large percentage of internet users engage actively on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Globally, the prevalence of social media use varies by region and demographic factors. For instance, younger

demographics tend to dominate social media usage, with platforms like TikTok and Snapchat gaining popularity among teenagers and young adults. The United States and China lead in terms of sheer numbers of users, followed closely by India, Brazil, and Indonesia (Statista, 2022).

Students today access health-related information from a variety of social media platforms that cater to their specific needs and preferences. Platforms like YouTube offer video content ranging from fitness routines to medical advice from professionals (Healthcare IT News, 2021). Instagram, known for its visual content, hosts influencers and organizations sharing health tips, mental wellness strategies, and nutrition advice through images and short videos (Sinnenberg et al., 2017). Twitter serves as a platform for quick updates on health news, research findings, and discussions among health professionals and students alike. Facebook groups provide communities where students can join specific health-related groups to share experiences, seek advice, and access resources on topics such as mental health, chronic illnesses, or fitness challenges (Moorhead et al., 2013).. Additionally, platforms like TikTok are increasingly popular for their short, engaging health-related videos that simplify complex health information and promote health awareness among young audiences. The diversity of these platforms allows students to find information that suits their learning styles and interests while fostering a dynamic exchange of health-related knowledge in digital spaces.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) remain a significant public health concern globally, affecting individuals' health, well-being, and social dynamics. STIs such as chlamydia, gonorrhea,

and syphilis pose risks of serious complications if untreated, underscoring the importance of preventive practices. Social media platforms play a crucial role in influencing STI preventive behaviors among undergraduates by disseminating information, shaping attitudes, and promoting awareness. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok feature campaigns and educational content on safe sexual practices and STI prevention (Lee et al., 2021). Twitter facilitates discussions among health professionals and students about recent developments in STI prevention strategies (Moorhead et al., 2013). Facebook groups provide spaces where students can share experiences and seek advice on STI prevention methods (Moorhead et al., 2013). However, the influence of social media is not uniformly positive; misinformation and stigma surrounding STIs can also spread, potentially undermining efforts to promote accurate knowledge and preventive behaviors (Sinnenberg et al., 2017). Sexually transmitted infections are preventable through effective preventive practices recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC emphasizes comprehensive sexual health education, including consistent and correct use of condoms, regular testing and treatment for STIs, and mutual monogamy with an uninfected partner. Vaccination against HPV and hepatitis B is also encouraged to prevent associated infections. Additionally, reducing the number of sexual partners and choosing partners who have been tested and treated for STIs can significantly lower the risk of transmission (CDC, n.d.).

Seeking health information on social media presents several barriers, including the prevalence of misinformation, varying levels of content credibility, and privacy concerns. Users often encounter conflicting information, making it challenging to discern accurate and reliable sources. The

credibility of health information is often questioned due to the lack of regulation and the presence of non-expert opinions (Shao et al., 2018). Additionally, privacy concerns can deter individuals from engaging fully in online health discussions, as personal health inquiries might be exposed to public view or misused by third parties (Moorhead et al., 2013). Despite these barriers, information obtained from social media can significantly influence STI preventive practices. Educational campaigns and peer discussions on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook have been shown to raise awareness and promote safer sexual behaviours among users (Choi et al., 2020). Social media's interactive nature enables real-time communication and personalized advice, which can enhance the adoption of preventive measures. However, the impact is contingent on the accuracy and trustworthiness of the information disseminated, highlighting the need for improved digital literacy and verification mechanisms (Ventola, 2014). This study investigated the impact of social media influence on sexually transmitted infection preventive practices among undergraduates

Statement of the Problem

Undergraduates are a vital segment of the society, and their health and well-being are crucial for the future of the nation. The rapid spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among undergraduates is a growing concern and their adoption of preventive practices is critical in mitigating this trend. However, despite the existing prevention efforts, the adoption of preventive practices remains low and the influence of social media on their behavior and decision

making processes poses a significant challenge to the effectiveness of STI prevention efforts. This highlights the need to investigate the impacts of social media on undergraduates STI preventive practices.

Also, STI cases are widely believed to be underreported among undergraduates and most cases are presented only after the individual starts to exhibit symptoms or complications. In most cases, the undergraduates with an STI is stigmatized and this stigmatization further affects their social, emotional and cognitive development. Putting this into consideration, public health initiatives, educational programs and awareness campaigns to promote STI preventions have been formulated by health organizations as a way of taming the worrisome increase in the incidences of STIs among undergraduates. Notable among these measures is the incorporation of social media based interventions to promote STI prevention. However while health organizations have continued to do their best to drastically reduce the incidence of STIs, the prevalence of STIs among undergraduates seems not to relent with many undergraduates still engaging in sexual behaviors. Hence, the need to investigate the impact of social media on undergraduates STI preventive practices is crucial.

Despite the efforts to promote STI prevention among undergraduates, the prevalence of STIs remains high. A study by Adebayo et al (2018), found a significant prevalence of STIs among undergraduates in Nigeria. Social media an ubiquitous aspect of young adult lives may be influencing their behavior and decision making processes, potentially hindering the effectiveness

of STI prevention efforts. However, there is a paucity of research exploring the specific impact of social media on undergraduates STI preventive practices in Nigeria.

Finally, due to the complex nature of STI prevention among undergraduates available research on the impact of social media on STI preventive practices remains limited, particularly in Nigeria. While studies by Okafor et al (2020) and Eze et al (2019) have investigated predictors of STIs among young adults, few have explored the specific role of social media in shaping their preventive behaviors.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. What type of social media platforms are used by undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking information on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices?
2. How frequently do undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media to seek information on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices?
3. What are the barriers faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin when seeking information on sexually transmitted infection preventive practices?
4. Does the information obtained from social media influence Sexually transmitted infection preventive practices of undergraduates at the University of Benin?

Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to assess the impact of social media on STI preventive practices among undergraduates in the University of Benin.

Other objectives of this study are:

- Examine the types of social media platforms used by undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking information on Sexually transmitted infection preventive practices.
- Examine how frequently undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media to seek information on sexually transmitted infection preventive practices.
- Investigate the barriers faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin when seeking information in sexually transmitted infection preventive practices on social media
- Determine if the information obtained from social media influences sexually transmitted infection preventive practices of undergraduates at the University of Benin

Significance of the Study

This study will be relevant and beneficial to the general public such as undergraduate, youth, parents, health educators, health practitioners, government and non-governmental agencies and also contributes to the body of knowledge. Also it will be a wake-up call for social media content developers to enhance their efficiency while developing creative contents in order to promote reliability of health related information available on these platforms. It will also heighten the

awareness of social media users on the need to discard fake and invalid information of health related information. The study will enable government and policy makers on the need to monitor content shared on social media platforms in order to avoid sharing panic related messages to the reading public as this is detriment to their disposition.

With the ability to disseminate information quickly and widely, social media can be used by health institutions to post health related information and share information with the public. Health institutions can inform the public about common health topics such as healthy living, immunization and smoking. They can communicate the risks of disease outbreaks and quickly provide instructions about preventive behaviors to a broad audience during disease outbreaks.

This study will further add to existing literature on this topic and as well serve as a benchmark and eye opener to students, scholars and researchers who may wish to carry out further research on this study or related domain in the future.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examined the impact of social media on STI preventive health practices and it will focus on undergraduates who are full time bachelor's degree students in University of Benin, Ugbowo campus.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- Theoretical Framework
- Conceptual Framework
- Overview of the Impact of Social Media Influence on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices Among Undergraduates
- Prevalence and pattern of the Impact of social media Influence on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices Among undergraduates
- Predictors of Social Media Influence on STI Preventive Practices
- Health Consequences of Social Media Influence on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices Among Undergraduates
- Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections: The Role of Parents/ Caregivers
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in the Health Belief Model (HBM) and the

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The HBM provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that influence undergraduate student's engagement in sexually transmitted infection (STI) preventive practices, particularly in the context of social media influences.

The Health Belief Model (HBM) posits that undergraduate student's engagement in STI preventive practices are influenced by their perceptions of four key factors: Perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, Perceived benefits, and Perceived barriers. Additionally, the HBM identifies two other crucial components: Cues to action and Self-efficacy.

In the area of Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) prevention among undergraduates, the Health Belief Model (HBM) offers a valuable lens through which to examine the motivations behind student's decisions to adopt or neglect preventive measures. Students who underestimate their vulnerability to STIs may be less inclined to take proactive steps to protect themselves (perceived risk and severity). Furthermore, the anticipated benefits of STI prevention, combined with the ease of accessing relevant information via social media platforms, may outweigh the perceived obstacles, such as the stigma surrounding STIs or the financial costs associated with preventive measures (Klemenc-Ketis, Hladnik, & Kersnik, 2010).

The HBM also underscores the significance of perceived barriers in shaping health behaviors. For university students, obstacles to adopting STI preventive practices may include limited awareness,

misconceptions about STIs, or the pervasive influence of social media misinformation. These barriers can lead students to prioritize convenience and social acceptability over caution, resulting in a greater likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. This phenomenon is corroborated by research on the impact of social media on health behaviors. Cues to action, a key component of the HBM, refer to external stimuli that prompt individuals to adopt health-promoting behaviors. For students, cues to adopt STI preventive practices may arise from social media campaigns, peer-led educational initiatives, or online resources. For instance, students who follow social media influencers who champion STI prevention may be more likely to adopt preventive measures themselves. This behavior is supported by studies demonstrating the efficacy of social media as a tool for promoting health behaviors (Sharma et al., 2019).

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Icek Ajzen (1985) provides a useful framework for understanding undergraduate's intentions to engage in STI preventive practices. The TPB suggests that three primary elements drive behavioral intentions: Attitude towards the behavior, perceived social norms and an Individual's perceived control over the behavior. This framework can be applied to understand how social media shapes undergraduates decisions regarding STI prevention.

From the TPB perspective, undergraduates' attitudes towards STI preventive practices such as condom use or regular testing are shaped by their perceptions of STI prevention, undergraduates

are more likely to develop favorable attitudes towards these practices. Social media platforms where peers and influencers share experiences and information, plays a significant role in shaping these perceptions.

Subjective norms, a crucial aspect of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), pertain to the perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in STI preventive practices. For undergraduates, social media platforms can significantly influence subjective norms as they often share and discuss their experiences and opinions on STI prevention. If students perceive that their online peers frequently engage in STI preventive practices and approve of these behaviors, they may feel a greater inclination to adopt these practices themselves.

Perceived behavioral control, another key component of the TPB, refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing STI preventive behaviors. Undergraduates who feel confident in their ability to access and use condoms or other preventive measures often due to online resources and social media campaigns are more likely to engage in these behaviors. This perception of control can also be influenced by the accessibility of STI testing and treatment services, which can be facilitated through online platforms.

The Health Belief Model (HBM) and TPB offers complimentary perspectives on health behaviors which can be integrated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of STI preventive

practices among undergraduates. The HBM focuses on individual's beliefs and health risks and benefits, while TPB emphasizes the role of social influences and perceived control.

Together, these theories suggest that STI preventive practices are multifaceted behaviors influenced by both personal beliefs and social contexts, including online environments. The online environment of social media platforms may also play a significant role in shaping STI preventive practices among undergraduates. The constant exposure to information and peer influences on social media, coupled with the pressure to conform to certain online norms, may increase student's reliance on STI preventive practices as a means of maintaining their online reputation and social standing.

Understanding the factors that influences undergraduates STI preventive practices is crucial for developing effective public health interventions. The Health Belief Model and Theory of Planned Behavior offers valuable insights into how personal beliefs, social media influences and perceived control shape these practices. By leveraging these theories, researchers and practitioners can create targeted campaigns that promotes healthy behaviors and reduce STI risks among students.

To put it simply, understanding why undergraduates do or do not practice STI prevention is key to promoting healthy behaviors. By applying established theories, we can develop interventions that effectively address the complex factors influencing these practices, ultimately reducing STI risk and promoting students well-being.

Concept of Social Media, STI and STI Preventive Practices

Social Media refers to any digital application or software that allows users to engage in social interaction. It is a collection of web-based applications that allows virtual connections of users with common interest to exchange information or ideas, videos in virtual communication and network. Social media refers to online platform or tools that allows users to create, share and interact with content, information or other users in virtual environment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

There are various types of social media and these includes Social Networking Sites such as Facebook, Twitter. Photo and Video Sharing and Photo such as Instagram, Youtube, TikTok. Blogging and microblogging platforms such as WordPress, Tumblr. Messaging Apps such as WhatsApp, WeChat e.t.c

STI stands for Sexually Transmitted Infections. They are infections that are primarily spread through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal and oral sex. STI can be transmitted through sexual contact with an infected person.

Here are effective STI Preventive Practices

Abstinence: Avoiding sexual contact

Mutual Monogamy: Being in a committed, exclusive relationship

Condom Use: Using condoms consistently and correctly.

Vaccination: Getting vaccinated against HPV, Hepatitis B and other STI preventable diseases.

Education and Awareness: understanding STI risks, symptoms and transmission.

Influence of Social Media on STI Preventive Practices

Awareness and Education

Social media plays a significant role in disseminating information and promoting awareness. Social media platforms provide information on STIs, prevention methods and resources, helping to break down and normalize conversations around STIs. Education focuses on sharing prevention methods, risk reduction strategies and resource sharing. Key messages emphasize that STIs are common, prevention is key, testing is essential, communication with partner is crucial and STIs are treatable. Target audiences includes youth, LGBTQ+ individuals, sex workers, people living with HIV/AIDS and marginalized communities.

Reduced Stigma

Social media helps normalize conversations around STIs by sharing personal stories, dispelling myths and humanizing experiences. Online platforms create safe spaces for judgement-free discussion and resource sharing, promoting inclusivity and empathy. By emphasizing that STIs affect anyone regardless of age, gender or orientation. Social media campaigns reduce shame and encourages open communication between partners.

Increased Reach

Social media vastly increases the reach of STI awareness and education efforts, targeting millions globally. Platforms allow for targeted campaigns, hashtag-driven conversations, influencer partnership and content sharing. By leveraging social media, health educators can bypass traditional barriers, reaching marginalized populations and optimizing outreach through analytics.

Peer-to-Peer Education

Social media significantly influences STI preventive practices among undergraduates. By leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and online forums, peers share accurate information, personal experience and resources, promoting awareness and behaviors. This approach normalizes STI prevention discussions, provides relatable role models, fosters online support network, encourages open dialogue and reaches a wider audience.

Access to Resources

Social Media platforms provide links to trusted websites, online hotlines, supportive services, infographics and educational materials ensuring easy accessibility to reliable information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Undergraduates commonly use various social media platforms to seek information. The most popular social media platforms among undergraduates for seeking information are Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, Snapchat and LinkedIn. (Perrin & Anderson,

2029). Instagram, used by 71-80% of undergraduates is a visual centric platform ideal for informational consent. Facebook, utilized by 45-50% serves as a hub for news, event and group discussions. Twitter with 35-40% usage provides real time updates and news. YouTube at 30-35% offers educational resources, lectures and tutorials.

The information undergraduates gather from social media can significantly influence their practices, attitudes and behaviors (Bull et al, 2012). Social media significantly impacts undergraduate's practices related to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), shaping their academic, personal, professional lives, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors concerning STIs prevention, testing and treatment (Morley et al, 2020). Academic habits are influenced through online resources, study groups and research collaborations. For instance, students may follow educational pages, join study groups or participate in online forums to enhance their learning experience (Selwyn, 2012). Health and wellness practices are also affected as students engage with fitness influencers, mental health advocates or wellness communities.

Undergraduates face numerous barriers when seeking health information on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) via social media, including information barriers, (informational barriers include concerns about accuracy, consistency and credibility of sources as well as information overload that makes it difficult to discern relevant facts). Accessibility barriers comprise limited digital literacy, language constraints and internet connectivity issues (Kirsch et al, 2017). Additionally, social and cultural barriers such as stigma, shame, social norms, cultural

and religious beliefs can discourage information seeking. Psychological barriers include fear, anxiety, embarrassment and self-efficacy concerns. To overcome these obstacles, undergraduates should consult credible sources, engage with reputable online forums and seek guidance from healthcare professionals (Hawn, 2009)

Furthermore, platform specific barriers like algorithmic limitations, advertising and online harassment can hinder effective information retrieval. Health literacy barriers including complexity of health information, lack of context and misinterpretation also pose significant challenges. To overcome these obstacles, undergraduates should consult credible sources, engage with reputable online forums and seek guidance from healthcare professionals.

Social Media's influence on sexually transmitted infection preventive practices among undergraduates is a pressing concern that affects their health and well-being across their lifespan. To comprehensively understand this phenomenon, the concept of social media influence on STI prevention must be examined from an ecological perspective dissecting individual, peer, community and societal factors that shape STI preventive behaviors (McLeroy et al, 1988) Building on the ecological model which has been successfully applied in health behavior research such as McLeroy et al, 1988 and considering the findings of Relevant Study such as (Morley et al, 2020) that highlighted the significance of social media in shaping health attitudes, this study conceptual frame work is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory 1979.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model posits that undergraduates sexually transmitted infection preventive practices are shaped by interconnected environmental factors across multiple levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At the microsystem level, direct interaction occurs within contexts such as peer groups, university health services, social media platforms and family. Mesosystems involves interactions between these microsystems like the relationship between peer group and social media. Ecosystems encompasses broader influences such as university polices and community resources. Macrosystems captures societal norms and cultural values surrounding STI prevention. The chronosystems accounts for temporal changes like shifts in social media usage patterns. This study focuses on the microsystems, examining how undergraduate's demographic characteristics (age, gender, academic program) and social media usage patterns intersects with peer and family influences to impact STI preventive practices.

Overview of the Impact of Social Media Influence on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices Among Undergraduates

Social media is the latest innovation in communication technology that has revolutionized the way people interact with each other (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It has become a popular tool for business to reach out to their target audiences, to build relationships and to engage with their customers (Trainor et al, 2014). Social media allows anyone to share and pass information on

without an effective method for filtering out invalid sources and information, thus, misinformation and disinformation are common, (wang et al 2019). The 21st century has ushered in unprecedented growth in science and technology, this has also debuted upsurge in tools and techniques of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Castells, 2010). Importantly, the information global highway is fertile with both traditional and social media platforms which further enhances trade and commerce, edutainment and infotainment, human interaction and interconnectedness to mention just a few (McQuail, 2010).

Many persons will not engage in health protective behaviors without first understanding that they are at risk for an adverse outcome (Weinstein, 1993). However, the concept of risk can be difficult for persons to grasp, especially with a health topic with which persons are not likely to have much experience before an outbreak (Rothman & Kiviniemi, 1999). Social media provides information that can help frame the public's understanding of complex, high contagious diseases (Chou et al, 2018). Social media has great potential to impact sexual health including sexually transmitted infection, prevention and care services. Social media are websites and apps that allows users to create and share digital contents. In 2019, the most popular platforms were YouTube and Facebook, followed by Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp and Reddit (Perrin & Anderson 2019).

Social media (or social networking) are interactive computer mediated technologies that

facilitates the creation and sharing of information. Ideas, careers, interest and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social media can serve as useful tools in behavior change initiatives received by digital routes (Webb et al, 2010).

For instance, digital media interventions which are interactive and tailored (meaning that users receive need based feedback in response to the input of user specific relevant data) as active engagement with intervention and receipt of information that is of user specific relevance is more likely to enhance consolidation of learning and behavior change (Noar et al, 2009).

In this era of social media, referred to as web 2.0 acts as meeting partners online, texting (the sharing of sexually explicit digital messages and or images) are unlikely to help users conceive positive sexual health ideas (Koehler, 2012). It is not unusual for social media users to be exposed to the risks of early age at sexual debut, excessive masturbation, unprotected sexual acts and multiple sexual partnerships (Bleakley et al, 2011). This trend has brought concerns among school authorities, parents, communication experts, and other relevant stakeholders on the benefits and potential risks facing undergraduates, as they engaged in online social networking to meet their social and educational needs (Pujazon-Zazik & Park, 2010).

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are primarily spread through sexual contact. While sexual contact is the primary mode of transmission, STIs can also be spread through other means

such as Mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy or childbirth (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2020), Blood transfusions (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020), Shared needles (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020). STIs are caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites that can be found in blood, semen, vaginal fluids and other bodily fluids. (World Health Organization, 2022)

Symptoms of Sexually Transmitted Infection

STDs can have a range of symptoms including no symptoms, this means that a person can get sexually transmitted infections from another person who seems healthy and may not even know they have an infection that is why sexually transmitted infections may go unnoticed until a person has complications or a partner is diagnosed. STI symptoms may include:

Sores or bumps on the genitals or in the oral or rectal area

Painful or burning urination

Discharge from the penis

Unusual or odorous vaginal discharge

Unusual vaginal bleeding

Pain during sex

Sore, swollen lymph nodes, particularly in the groin but sometimes more widespread

Lower abdominal pain

Fever

Rash over the trunk, hands or feet

Sexually transmitted infection symptoms may appear a few days after exposure, but it may take years before having any noticeable problems depending on what is causing the STIs.

Risk Factors of Sexually Transmitted Infections

Engaging in high-risk sexual behaviors is a significant factor in the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Having multiple sexual partners for instance, increases the likelihood of encountering an infected partner, thereby elevating the risk of STI transmission (Fenton et al, 2001). Unprotected sex including vaginal, anal or oral sex without the use of condoms or other barrier methods also heightens the risk of STIs (Cates et al, 2004).

Additionally, individuals with a history of STIs are at increased risk of future infections, as they may continue to engage in high-risk behaviors or have ongoing exposure to infected partners (Berman & Hein, 1999).

Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections

Preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) requires a multi-faceted approach that incorporates education, behavioral change, and biomedical interventions. Education is a critical

component of STI prevention as it enables individuals to make informed decisions about their sexual health (Kirby et al., 2007). Comprehensive sex education programs that provide accurate and age-appropriate information about STIs, condoms, and contraception have been shown to reduce STI risk behaviors among young people (Johnson et al., 2011). Behavioral change, such as reducing the number of sexual partners and increasing condom use is also essential for STI prevention (Cohen et al., 2012). Biomedical interventions including vaccination against human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B, can also prevent STIs (CDC, 2019). Furthermore, regular STI testing and treatment are critical for preventing the transmission of STIs and reducing the risk of complications (Fenton et al., 2001).

The impact of social media on sexually transmitted infection (STI) preventive practices among undergraduates is a complex issue that requires consideration of cultural context. With the rising prevalence of STIs among undergraduates and the potential consequences of untreated infections, effective prevention strategies are crucial. Social media with its widespread influence plays a significant role in shaping undergraduates attitudes and behaviors towards STI prevention. However, there is a need to investigate how social media specifically impacts STI preventive practices among undergraduates, considering the cultural nuances that influence their experiences.

The significance of STI prevention among undergraduates cannot be overstated. Undergraduates are vulnerable to STIs due to factors like sexual exploration, peer influence, and limited health literacy. Social media, a dominant platform for information dissemination and

socialization among undergraduates, plays a critical role in shaping their attitudes and behaviors towards STI prevention. Effective STI prevention strategies are crucial to:

Reduce the risk of long-term health consequences, such as infertility and cancer

Minimize the spread of STIs within the undergraduate community

Promote healthy relationships and communication

Leverage social media's influence to enhance STI prevention awareness and behaviors

Similarly, the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) among undergraduates in Sub-Saharan Africa is a pressing concern. The World Health Organization (WHO) and other global health authorities emphasize the need for comprehensive STI prevention and control strategies. In line with this, the WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research (2019) highlights the importance of protecting young people's sexual and reproductive health rights. STI prevention is a critical aspect of this, as it involves safeguarding undergraduates from unwanted sexual exposures, promoting healthy relationships, and addressing the social determinants of health that contribute to STI vulnerability. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020), STI prevention encompasses a range of strategies, including education, condom promotion, and access to STI screening and treatment. In this context, STI prevention is not only a public health imperative but also a fundamental aspect of protecting undergraduate physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

The failure to effectively prevent STIs among undergraduates has severe consequences including increased STI transmission, emotional distress, and decreased academic performance. As future leaders, it is crucial that undergraduates are equipped with effective STI prevention strategies to protect their health and well-being. Social media presents a unique opportunity for STI prevention interventions, yet its potential remains untapped among undergraduate populations in Nigeria. Bridging this gap is essential to reducing the high prevalence rate of STIs among undergraduates and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

In conclusion, a common misconception about STI prevention among undergraduates is that it is solely the responsibility of healthcare providers and public health campaigns. However, the reality is that STI prevention requires a multifaceted approach that includes social media-based interventions, education, and community engagement. By recognizing the critical role that social media can play in STI prevention, we can work towards creating a safer and healthier environment for undergraduates across various campuses and communities.

Prevalence and Pattern of Sexually Transmitted Infections

In the midst of campus life, a hidden reality lurks. Every day, millions of young adults are exposed to the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The statistics are staggering – 1 million new cases of curable STIs emerge daily among people aged 15-49 years. In Nigeria, the prevalence of STIs among undergraduates stands at 14.4%, a sobering reminder of the challenge

at hand. As undergraduates navigate the complexities of young adulthood, they face a myriad of risk factors, unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, and lack of STI testing and treatment all contribute to the perfect storm. But there's another factor at play - social media. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter can be both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, they provide access to vital sexual health information, allowing undergraduates to educate themselves and make informed decisions. On the other hand, they normalize risky behaviors, decrease the perception of risk, and facilitate social networking and partner-finding. Peer influence runs rampant, making it difficult for undergraduates to resist the pressure to conform.

Globally, undergraduates are disproportionately affected by sexually transmitted infections (STIs) with studies indicating a prevalence rate of 13.4% among this demographic (Mavedzenge et al, 2015). In terms of social media usage, research shows that 90% of undergraduates utilize social media platforms, with 70% accessing these platforms daily (Pew Research Centre 2020). Specifically, patterns of social media usage among undergraduates reveals that 60% use social media to seek health information while 45% report altered health behavior due to social media influences (Kapidzic & Herring, 2016). Undergraduates STI prevention behaviors are influenced by online peer norms, with 75% reporting increased condom use due to social media campaigns (Bull et al, 2012). These statistics underscore the critical need to investigate the intersection of social media influence and STI preventive practices among undergraduates.

Furthermore, social media often perpetuates harmful stereotypes and stigmatizes STI testing and treatment. The fear of being judged or ostracized prevents many undergraduates from seeking help, leaving them vulnerable to the consequences of untreated STIs. The consequences are real, infertility, chronic pain, and even death. Yet, many undergraduates remain unaware of the risks or ignore them altogether. It's a ticking time bomb, waiting to unleash a wave of health problems that could have been prevented. This is the reality of STI prevention among undergraduates, a complex web of risk factors, social media influence, and missed opportunities for education and intervention but it's not all doom and gloom. By acknowledging the problem and working together, we can create a safer, healthier environment for undergraduates to thrive.

Understanding the factors that predict the impact of social media on STI prevention among undergraduates is crucial for developing effective interventions. Predictors are variables that can forecast or influence the outcome of interest, which in this case is the impact of social media on STI prevention behaviors. By identifying these predictors, we can better comprehend how social media influences undergraduate attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding STI prevention, and design targeted strategies to mitigate the risks and maximize the benefits of social media in promoting healthy behaviors.

Demographic Predictors of Social Media Influence on STI Preventive Practices

Several researchers have established a link between social media influence on STI preventive practices and several factors they believe are predictors. Some of these factors are as follows:

Gender as a Predictor of Social Media Influence on STI Preventive Practices

Researchers have expressed diverse opinions on the relationship between gender and the effectiveness of social media in promoting sexually transmitted infection (STI) preventive practices among undergraduates. Studies have shown that gender significantly influences social media usage patterns and health information seeking behaviors, with female undergraduates more likely to engage with STI prevention content on social media (Bull et al, 2012).

Conversely, male undergraduates tend to rely on online forums and peer networks for STI information (Lee et al, 2017). Furthermore, research indicates that social media based interventions targeting female undergraduates results in increased condom use and STI testing (Jones et al, 2014). However, the impact of social media on STI prevention behaviors among male undergraduates remains understudied.

Age as a Predictor of Social Media Influence on STI Preventive Practices

Age significantly predicts social media's influence on sexually transmitted infection (STI) preventive practices among undergraduates. Research indicates that younger undergraduates (18-20 years) are more susceptible to social media's influence on STI prevention behaviors, with increased exposure to STI related content correlating with improved condom use and testing (Bull et al, 2012). In contrast, older undergraduates (21-24 years) tends to rely more on peer networks

and online forums for STI information, reducing the impacts of social media based interventions (Lee et al, 2017).

Social Media Usage

Social media usage plays a significant role in shaping undergraduates attitudes and behaviors regarding STI prevention. The frequency and duration of social media use, as well as the type of platforms used can influence exposure to sexual health information, misinformation, or influencer content. Online behaviors, such as engaging with sexual health content or participating in online forums, can also impact undergraduate knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to STI prevention.

STI Knowledge

STI knowledge is a crucial factor in undergraduate ability to prevent and manage STIs. The level of awareness and understanding about STIs, their symptoms, and prevention methods can significantly impact undergraduate attitudes and behaviors regarding STI prevention. When undergraduates possess accurate and comprehensive knowledge about STIs, they are better equipped to make informed decisions about their sexual health, recognize the risks associated with certain behaviors and take appropriate measures to prevent STI transmission.

Sexual Behavior

Sexual behavior is a critical predictor of undergraduate risk of contracting STIs. Engagement in risky sexual behaviors, such as unprotected sex, multiple partners, and inconsistent condom use, increases the likelihood of STI transmission. Undergraduates who engage in these behaviors are more likely to be exposed to STIs and their risk of infection is higher compared to those who practice safer sex. Furthermore, sexual behavior is often influenced by a complex array of factors, including social norms, peer pressure, and individual attitudes and beliefs, making it a critical component to address in STI prevention efforts.

Risk Perception

Risk perception plays a significant role in undergraduate decisions regarding STI prevention. Undergraduates perceived risk of contracting STIs and their attitude towards STI prevention can influence their engagement in protective behaviors, such as condom use and regular STI testing. When undergraduates perceive themselves to be at high risk of STI infection, they are more likely to take preventive measures. However, if they underestimate their risk or believe that STIs will not affect them, they may be less likely to engage in protective behaviors, increasing their vulnerability to STI transmission.

Peer Influence

Peer influence is a powerful predictor of undergraduate sexual behaviors and STI prevention practices. The attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of friends and peers can significantly shape an individual's decisions regarding sexual health. Undergraduates are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors if their peers normalize or encourage such behaviors. Conversely, peers can also promote positive behaviors, such as condom use and STI testing, by sharing accurate information, supporting healthy choices, and fostering a culture of care and responsibility. The influence of peers can be a critical factor in either increasing or decreasing undergraduate risk of STI infection.

Demographic Factors

Demographic factors, such as age, gender, year of study, and socioeconomic status, can influence undergraduate vulnerability to STIs and their access to STI prevention resources. For instance, younger undergraduates may be more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors due to lack of experience and impulse control. Female undergraduates may face unique challenges, such as higher biological susceptibility to certain STIs and gender-based barriers to accessing healthcare. Additionally, undergraduates from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may encounter systemic obstacles, including limited access to healthcare and STI testing, increasing their risk of undiagnosed and untreated STIs.

Social Media Contents

Social media content plays a significant role in shaping undergraduates knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding STI prevention. Exposure to sexual health information, misinformation, or influencer content on social media can influence undergraduate perceptions of risk, attitudes towards STI prevention, and engagement in protective behaviors. Accurate and reliable information can empower undergraduates to make informed decisions about their sexual health, while misinformation can perpetuate harmful myths and stigma. Furthermore, social media platforms can serve as a critical channel for health promotion, education, and outreach, providing undergraduates with accessible and engaging resources to support their sexual health and well-being.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a vital predictor of undergraduate sexual health and STI prevention practices. The level of parental guidance and support regarding sexual health can significantly impact undergraduate knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to STI prevention. Parents who maintain open and honest communication with their children, provide accurate and comprehensive sexual health information, and encourage responsible decision-making can help undergraduates develop healthy attitudes and behaviors. Conversely, a lack of parental involvement or inconsistent messaging can lead to confusion, misinformation, and increased risk of STI transmission. Even in

young adulthood, parental influence can continue to shape undergraduate's sexual health choices and outcomes.

Availability and Accessibility of STI Testing

Availability and accessibility of STI testing, treatment, and education are crucial components of a supportive campus environment. Campuses that provide comprehensive resources empower undergraduates to take control of their sexual health. Inclusive policies support diverse student populations and needs, creating a safe and welcoming environment for all undergraduates. These policies can impact STI prevention efforts and resource allocation. A healthy campus culture promotes positive relationships and STI prevention. Campuses that foster a culture of care encourage undergraduates to prioritize their sexual health and well-being. To create a supportive campus environment, campuses should conduct campus needs assessments to understand campus-specific needs and concerns, develop comprehensive resources, implement inclusive policies, and foster a healthy campus culture through campus events and initiatives. By understanding the impact of campus environment on STI prevention, campuses can create an ecosystem that promotes healthy relationships, STI prevention, and overall well-being.

Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections: The Role of Parents/Caregivers

As undergraduates navigate the complexities of young adulthood, parents and caregivers play a vital role in supporting their sexual health and well-being (Kirby, 2007). Despite the challenges of addressing sensitive topics, parents and caregivers can have a profound impact on preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among this demographic (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000)

Open Communication

Parents and caregivers can foster open communication with their undergraduates, creating a safe and non-judgmental space to discuss sexual health concerns. By listening actively and providing accurate information, they can help undergraduates make informed decisions about their sexual behavior.

Sexual Health Education

Parents and caregivers can also provide comprehensive sexual health education, addressing topics such as STI prevention, contraception, and healthy relationships. By supplementing formal education with open dialogue, they can help undergraduates develop a nuanced understanding of sexual health.

Setting Boundaries Expectations

Moreover, parents and caregivers can set clear boundaries and expectations for their undergraduate sexual behavior, encouraging responsible decision-making and respect for themselves and others.

Seeking Professional Help

If needed, parents and caregivers can seek professional help from healthcare providers, counselors, or sex therapists to support their undergraduate's sexual health and well-being.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The impact of social media on sexually transmitted infection (STI) preventive practices among undergraduates has been a growing concern. Research has shown that social media has a significant influence on young adults' sexual health behaviors and attitudes. Social media platforms have become a primary source of information and socialization, shaping undergraduates' perceptions of sexual health and relationships. However, social media also perpetuates harmful stereotypes and stigma surrounding STIs, making it harder for undergraduates to seek help and information. Misinformation and inaccurate content are prevalent on social media, further complicating the issue. Despite these challenges, social media can also provide a platform for accurate information and resources on STI prevention. Comprehensive sexual health education and awareness campaigns can be effective in promoting healthy behaviors and informed decision making.

Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in mitigating the negative impacts of social media on undergraduate's sexual health. Open communication, guidance, and support can help undergraduates navigate the complexities of social media and develop healthy attitudes towards

sexual health. School personnel also have a vital role in addressing the influence of social media on undergraduates' sexual health. Providing comprehensive sexual health education, addressing the impact of social media, and creating a supportive school environment can empower undergraduates to make informed decisions about their sexual health. Ultimately, undergraduates themselves must be empowered to take an active role in promoting healthy behaviors and accurate information on social media. By working together, we can create a culture of health, wellness, and informed decision-making that extends beyond the campus boundaries and into the wider community.

Despite the existing research on the impact of social media on STI preventive practices among undergraduates, there is a need for further investigation specifically among students of the University of Benin. A significant research gap exists in understanding the unique ways in which social media influences the sexual health behaviors of University of Benin students, including their attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Additionally, there is a lack of evidence-based interventions that address the specific challenges posed by social media in this population.

Furthermore, the role of University of Benin students themselves in promoting healthy behaviors and accurate information on social media remains understudied. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the impact of social media on STI preventive practices among University of Benin students and identifying effective strategies for promoting healthy behaviors.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD OF THE STUDY

This chapter describes the method and procedure used by the researcher in conducting the study.

It is presented under the following headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the Descriptive Survey research design. According to Jackson (2009), this research method is one in which participants answer questions administered through interviews or questionnaire after the researcher describes the responses given.

This method is considered most appropriate as the researcher intends to get opinions, information and reactions from the target population.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises of thirty-nine thousand and thirty-seven (39,037) students from the 14 faculties in University of Benin. The population comprises of full- time undergraduate students of the various faculties. The present population is thirty-nine thousand and thirty-seven (39,037) students. The faculties are shown in the table below:

S/N	FACULTIES	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	AGRICULTURE	900	1,156	2,056
2	ART	2,197	3,513	5,710
3	BMS	773	1,175	1,948
4	DENTISTRY	115	49	164
5	EDUCATION	2,993	4,376	7,369
6	ENGINEERING	3,108	503	3,611
7	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE	462	134	596
8	LAW	414	575	989
9	LIFE SCIENCE	2,193	2,895	5,088
10	MANAGEMENT SCIENCE	1,561	1,568	3,129
11	MEDICINE	542	253	795
12	PHARMACY	582	412	994

13	PHYSICAL SCIENCE	2,206	1,346	3,552
14	SOCIAL SCIENCE	1,703	1,333	3,036
	TOTAL	19,955	19,288	39,037

Source: Academic Planning Unit, Students Affairs Division, University of Benin, Ugbowo Campus.

Sample And Sampling Techniques

The sample size for this study is 247 respondents. The sampling technique used is the Simple Random Sampling Technique to select six faculties out of the fourteen faculties. Therefore, 2% of the population was selected from the six faculties using the Proportionate Sampling Technique

S/N	FACULTIES	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
1	AGRICULTURE	2,056	41.12
2	DENTISTRY	164	3.29
3	EDUCATION	7,369	147.38
4	LAW	989	19.78
5	MEDICINE	795	15.9
6	PHARMACY	994	19.88
	TOTAL	12,367	247.35
		247	

2% of the population was taken from the six faculties

Research Instrument

The instrument for this study is a self-constructed questionnaire. The instrument contains two sections A and B. Section A contains personal data of the respondents (Demographic data) such as Age, Sex, Gender and Level. Section B contains 20 items related to the research questions. A four point scoring scale drawn along the modified Likert summated rating scale for measurement was adopted.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure that the questionnaire used for the study is valid, the instrument will be content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts from the department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. Their corrections will be incorporated into the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The test re-test method will be used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The constructed instrument will be administered to 20 respondents and after an interval of two weeks, the same instrument will again be administered to the same group of respondents. The scores of the administrations will be correlated using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, and the resulting reliability coefficient is expected to be 0.72

Method of Data Collection

The research Instrument will be personally administered by the researcher to the respondents. The questionnaires will be completed by the respondents and will be retrieved immediately by the researcher to achieve 100% response and returns.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and frequency count was used to analyze the responses of the respondents on the questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULT AND DISCUSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results obtained from the analysis of data collected. The data collected from respondents were analysed and discussed in line with the research questions and the formulated hypotheses as follows:

Presentation of Results

Section A: Socio-demographic information of respondents

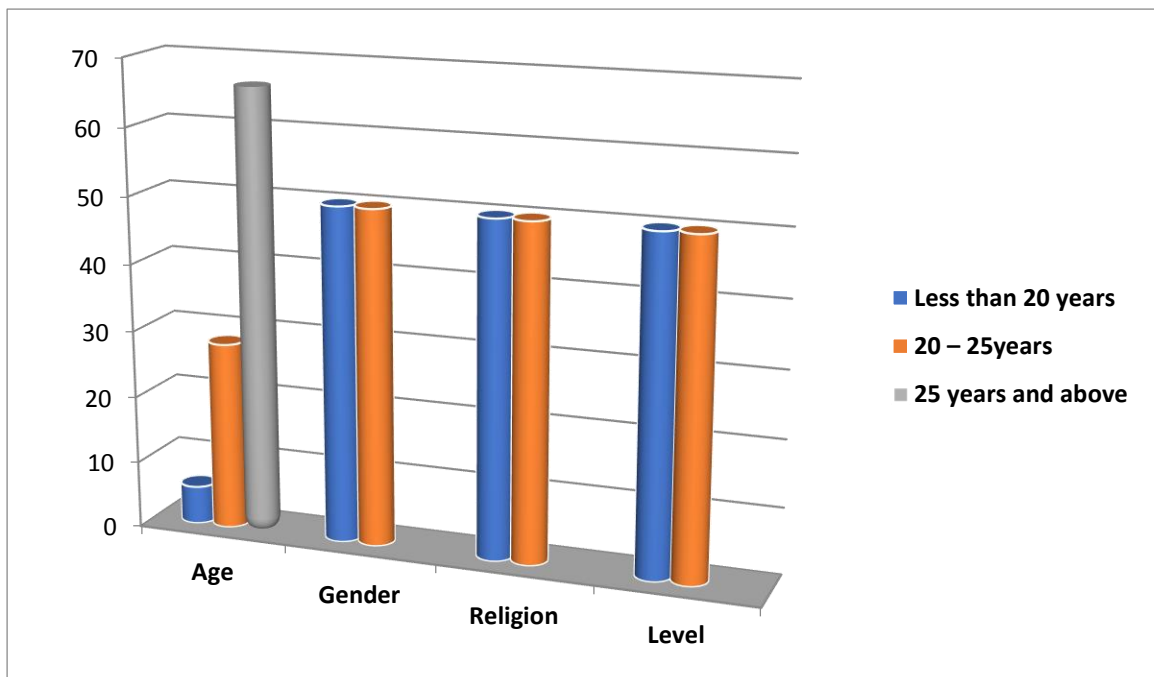


Fig 3: Socio-demographic information of respondents

Figure 3 reveals the socio-demographic information of respondents. It can be seen that 22(5.72%), 78(28.13%) and 147(66.15%) respondents were between the ages of less than 20years, 20-25years and 25years and above respectively. Also, the respondents were evenly distributed 124(50%) based on gender, religion and level.

Research question one: What type of social media platforms are used by undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking health related information?

S/N	Social media platforms	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Facebook	100 (47.2%)	84 (34.8%)	46 (13.1%)	17 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agreed
2	WhatsApp	96 (34.3%)	118 (47.1%)	20 (9.2%)	13 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agreed
3	Twitter	108 (33.1%)	112 (52.6%)	10 (5.5%)	17 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agreed
4	YouTube	147 (50.2%)	70 (32.4%)	20 (12.1%)	10 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agreed
5	TikTok	100 (35.2%)	96 (32.4%)	30 (20.3%)	21 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agreed

Cluster Mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; < 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 2 reflect the type of social media platforms used by undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking health related information with the mean rating ranging from

3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from .573 to .772. The highest mean of 3.72 indicates that Facebook is one of social media platforms used by University of Benin Study for seeking health related information. The mean 3.52 shows that WhatsApp was also a means. The mean 3.50 shows that TikTok was also a social media platform. The mean 3.42 shows that YouTube was also one of those social media platforms. The lowest mean of 3.34 indicates that Twitter was also a platform. According to the analysis above, it revealed that the above listed social media platforms are used by the undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking health related information.

Research question two: How frequently do undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media to seek health-related information?

Table 3: Frequency and percentage on how frequently do undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media to seek health-related information

S/N	Item	Often (%)	Seldom (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	How frequently do you use social media to seek health related information?	188 (66.0%)	36 (17.0%)	10 (7.2%)	13 (9.8%)	3.54	.579	Agreed
2	How frequently do you spend at least an hour on social media everyday looking for health information?	120 (26.0%)	80 (24.0%)	37 (10.0%)	10 (6.7%)	3.42	.575	Agreed
3	How frequently do you check your social media accounts for updates on health-related topics?	128 (48.8%)	110 (38.8%)	9 (12.4%)	0 (0%)	3.20	.535	Agreed
4	How frequently do you follow health professionals, organizations or pages on social media to stay informed?	154 (62.7%)	66 (17.7%)	17 (10.3%)	10 (5.5%)	3.26	.565	Agreed
5	How frequently do you rely on social media for health information instead of consulting a healthcare professional	120 (26.7%)	80 (24.0%)	35 (10.0%)	12 (6.7%)	3.12	.689	Agreed

Cluster Mean 3.26 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; < 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Results in Table 3 reflects how frequently undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media to seek health-related information, with mean value ranging from 3.12 to 3.54 while the standard deviation also ranges from .535 to .689. The mean of 3.54 shows that undergraduates often use the social media to seek health related information. The mean of 3.42 shows that undergraduates often spend at least an hour on social media everyday looking for health information. The mean of 3.26 shows that undergraduates frequently do you check your social media accounts for updates on health-related topics often. The mean of 3.20 shows that undergraduates frequently do follow health professionals, organizations or pages on social media to stay informed often. The lowest mean of 3.12 shows that undergraduates frequently do rely on social media for health information instead of consulting a healthcare professional. Therefore, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents frequently do use social media to seek health-related information.

Research question three: What are the barriers faced by undergraduates at the university of Benin when seeking health information on social media?

Table 3: Frequency and percentage on the barriers faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin when seeking health information on social media

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Health information on social media platforms are often unreliable hence I do not use social media to seek health information	99 (50.2%)	89 (30.2%)	30 (11.4%)	29 (8.2%)	3.10	.789	Agreed
2	Information overload is a barrier to seeking health information on social media	114 (38.2%)	124 (48.3%)	9 (13.5%)	0 (0%)	3.12	.789	Agreed
3	Limited internet access is a barrier to seeking health information on social media	103 (37.8%)	97 (33.5%)	20 (11.7%)	27 (17.0%)	2.80	.948	Agreed
4	High cost of internet data plans limits my ability to access health information online	98 (38.4%)	99 (48.9%)	20 (4.8%)	30 (7.4%)	2.92	.886	Agreed
5	Complexity of medical terminology is a barrier to seeking health related information on social media	97 (38.1%)	79 (32.7%)	45 (17.3%)	26 (11.9%)	2.96	.832	Agreed
Cluster Mean 2.98 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; < 2.5 is rejected								

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 3 reflects the barriers faced by undergraduates at the university of Benin when seeking health information on social media, with mean value ranging from 2.80 to 3.10 while the

standard deviation also ranges from .789 to .948. The mean 3.10 indicates that health information on social media platforms is often unreliable hence I do not use social media to seek health information which is one of the barriers faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin. The mean 3.12 indicates that information overload is a barrier to seeking health information on social media. The mean 2.92 indicates that high cost of internet data plans limits my ability to access health information online. The lowest mean 2.80 indicates that limited internet access is a barrier to seeking health information on social media. It can be concluded on that the above listed barriers are the barrier faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin in Using the Social media platform for seeking health information.

Research question four: Does the information obtained from social media influence preventive health practices of undergraduates at the university of Benin?

Table 3: Frequency and percentage on if the information obtained from social media influence preventive health practices of undergraduates at the university of Benin

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	The health information obtained from social media has increased my awareness of preventive health practices	108 (47.2%)	98 (34.8%)	16 (13.1%)	8 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agreed
2	The health information obtained from social media has motivated me to adopt healthy behaviors	88 (34.3%)	104 (47.1%)	24 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agreed
3	The health information obtained from social media has not influenced my decision to seek medical attention when needed	76 (33.1%)	104 (52.6%)	14 (5.5%)	16 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agreed
4	The health information obtained from social media has not increased my confidence in making informed decisions about my health	118 (50.2%)	92 (32.4%)	16 (12.1%)	8 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agreed
5	The health information obtained from social media has not had a positive impact on my overall preventive health practices	76 (35.2%)	74 (32.4%)	66 (20.3%)	31 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agreed
6	The health information obtained from social media has made me self-diagnose	99 (50.2%)	89 (30.2%)	30 (11.4%)	29 (8.2%)	3.10	.789	Agreed

	instead of consulting a healthcare professional								
7	The health information obtained from social media has caused me to doubt my healthcare provider's advice	114 (38.2%)	124 (48.3%)	9 (13.5%)	0 (0%)	3.12	.789	Agree	
8	The health information obtained from social media has delayed me from seeking medical attention	103 (37.8%)	97 (33.5%)	20 (11.7%)	27 (17.0%)	2.80	.948	Agree	
9	The health information obtained from social media often contradicts the health information gotten from a healthcare professional	98 (38.4%)	99 (48.9%)	20 (4.8%)	30 (7.4%)	2.92	.886	Agree	

Cluster Mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; < 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 5 reflects the information obtained from social media influence preventive health practices of undergraduates at the university of Benin, with a mean rating ranging from 2.98 to 3.26 while the standard deviation also ranges from .633 to .895. The mean 3.26 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has increased my awareness of preventive health practices. The mean 3.12 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has motivated me to adopt healthy behaviors. The mean 3.16 indicates that specific interventions for different sectors. The mean 3.18 indicates the health information obtained from social media has not influenced my decision to seek medical attention when needed. The lowest mean of 2.98 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has not increased my confidence in making informed decisions about my health. It was also reflected the mean 3.10

indicates that the health information obtained from social media has not had a positive impact on my overall preventive health practices. The mean 3.12 indicates the health information obtained from social media has made me self-diagnose instead of consulting a healthcare professional. The mean 2.92 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has caused me to doubt my healthcare provider's advice. The mean 2.80 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has delayed me from seeking medical attention. It can be concluded on that the information obtained from social media influence preventive health practices of undergraduates at the university of Benin.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the research question one reflected the type of social media platforms used by undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking health related information. The mean of 3.72 indicates which happens to be the highest mean revealed that Facebook is one of social media platforms used by University of Benin Study for seeking health related information. The mean 3.52 shows that WhatsApp was also a means. The mean 3.50 shows that TikTok was also a social media platform. The mean 3.42 shows that YouTube was also one of those social media platforms. The lowest mean of 3.34 indicates that Twitter was also a platform. According to the analysis above, it revealed that the above listed social media platforms are used by the undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking health related information. This finding is in line with the study of Ohaja, 2018 which revealed that (Facebook, Whatsapp) are the social media platforms in which students gets information most concerning health related issues.

Findings from the research question two revealed how frequently undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media to seek health-related information. The mean of 3.54 shows that undergraduates often use the social media to seek health related information. The mean of 3.42 shows that undergraduates often spend at least an hour on social media everyday looking for health information. The mean of 3.26 shows that undergraduates frequently do you check your social media accounts for updates on health-related topics often. The mean of 3.20 shows that undergraduates frequently do follow health professionals, organizations or pages on social media to stay informed often. The mean of 3.12 shows that undergraduates frequently do rely on social media for health information instead of consulting a healthcare professional. Therefore, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents frequently do use social media to seek health-related information. This finding is in line with the findings of Petronio, 2022 which revealed that most students tend to get their health-related information on the social media platforms.

The findings from the third research questions revealed the barriers faced by undergraduates at the university of Benin when seeking health information on social media. The mean 3.10 indicates that health information on social media platforms is often unreliable hence I do not use social media to seek health information which is one of the barriers faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin. The mean 3.12 indicates that information overload is a barrier to seeking health information on social media. The mean 2.92 indicates that high cost of internet data plans limits my ability to access health information online. The mean 2.80 indicates that limited internet access is a barrier to seeking health information on social media. It can be

concluded on that the above listed barriers are the barrier faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin in Using the Social media platform for seeking health information. This finding is in line with the findings of Yingying and Guoping, 2021 which they revealed that information overload is one of the barrier undergraduates faces when trying to get health-related information on the social media platforms.

Findings from the last research questions revealed if the information obtained from social media influence preventive health practices of undergraduates at the University of Benin. The mean 3.26 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has increased my awareness of preventive health practices. The mean 3.12 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has motivated me to adopt healthy behaviors. The mean 3.16 indicates that specific interventions for different sectors. The mean 3.18 indicates the health information obtained from social media has not influenced my decision to seek medical attention when needed. The mean of 2.98 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has not increased my confidence in making informed decisions about my health. It was also reflected the mean 3.10 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has not had a positive impact on my overall preventive health practices. The mean 3.12 indicates the health information obtained from social media has made me self-diagnose instead of consulting a healthcare professional. The mean 2.92 indicates that the health information obtained from social media has caused me to doubt my healthcare provider's advice. The mean 2.80 indicates that the health

information obtained from social media has delayed me from seeking medical attention. It can be concluded on that the information obtained from social media influence preventive health practices of undergraduates at the university of Benin. This finding is in line with the findings of Smith, 2020 which revealed that social media platforms has a huge influence on the preventive health practices of undergraduates of Nigerian University.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on summary, conclusion and recommendations.

Summary

This study determined the impact of social media influence on sexually transmitted infection preventive practices among undergraduates. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises of thirty-nine thousand and thirty-seven (39,037) students from the 14 faculties in University of Benin. The population comprises of full- time undergraduate students of the various faculties. The present population is thirty-nine thousand and thirty-seven (39,037) students. The sample size for this study is 247 respondents. The sampling technique used is the Simple Random Sampling Technique to select six faculties out of the fourteen faculties. Therefore, 2% of the population was selected from the six faculties using the Proportionate Sampling Technique. The major instrument that was used for the study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled **“IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION PREVENTIVE PRACTICES AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN”**. The questionnaire was segmented into two sections; section A and B. Section A measures the demographic variables of the respondents such as gender, age, year of study while section B consist of 20 item statements drawn from the research questions. The instrument designed by the researcher was subjected for face validation by the researcher

Supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Health Safety and Environmental Science, Faculty of Education, university of Benin, Benin City.

To establish the reliability of the instruments, it was administered to students in who were not part of the study population, and thereafter Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to ascertain the internal consistency. It yielded an alpha value of 0.72 hence the instrument was considered reliable. The data collected was analyzed using the frequency count mean, and the standard deviation. The findings generally showed that Social Media has Influence on STI Preventive Practices among Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin, Edo State. The major findings of the study were as follows:

1. There are types of social media platforms used by undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking information on Sexually transmitted infection preventive practices such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and tiktok.
2. Undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media frequently to seek information on sexually transmitted infection preventive practices.
3. There are barriers faced by undergraduates at the University of Benin when seeking information in sexually transmitted infection preventive practices on social media such as Information overload etc.
4. The information obtained from social media has influences sexually transmitted infection preventive practices of undergraduates at the University of Benin.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Social Media has Influence on STI Preventive Practices among Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin, Edo State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made

1. The study proposes health communication as one of the general studies to be offered in the university to help broaden students' horizon on the issue, and teach common risky behaviours to eschew, and safety virtues to pursue.
2. To enhance efficacy in the use of interactive media for health promotion/communication efforts, especially those aimed at youths and adolescents, there is need to examine gender and other health related factors that predict interactive media preferences.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.

**Questionnaire on the Impact of Social Media Influence on Sexually Transmitted Infection
Practices Among Undergraduates of the University of Benin**

Dear Respondent,

I am Ahuean Blessing a student of the above department, carrying out a research on the “Impact of Social Media influence on Sexually Transmitted Infection Preventive Practices Among Undergraduates of the University of Benin”.

This is designed to access the Impact of Social Media Influence on STI Preventive Practices Among Undergraduate Students of the University of Benin, Edo State. This research work is purely for academic purpose and will be treated as confidential. You are therefore required to kindly and truthfully respond by providing answers to the questions below.

Thank you.

INSTRUCTION: Please tick () as appropriate

Section A: Demographic Information

Gender Male () Female () Religion Christianity () Islam () Others ()

Age Less than 20 years () 20 – 24 years () 25 years and above

Level 100 () 200 () 300 () 400 ()

Section B: Respondent Responses

S/N	ITEMS	Facebook	WhatsApp	Twitter	YouTube	TikTok
RQ1	What type of social media platforms are used by undergraduates at the University of Benin for seeking health related information?					
1	Which of the following social media platform(s) do you use in seeking health related information NOTE: you can tick more than one					
		OFTEN	SELDOM	RARELY	NEVER	
RQ2	How frequently do undergraduates at the University of Benin use social media to seek health-related information?					
2	How frequently do you use social media to seek health related information					
3	How frequently do you spend at least an hour on social media everyday looking for health information					
4	How frequently do you check your social media accounts for updates on health-related topics					
5	How frequently do you follow health professionals, organizations or pages on social media to stay informed					
6	How frequently do you rely on social media for health information instead of consulting a healthcare professional					

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
RQ3	What are the barriers faced by undergraduates at the university of Benin when seeking health information on social media?				
7	Health information on social media platforms are often unreliable hence I do not use social media to seek health information				
8	Information overload is a barrier to seeking health information on social media				
9	Limited internet access is a barrier to seeking health information on social media				
10	High cost of internet data plans limits my ability to access health information online				
11	Complexity of medical terminology is a barrier to seeking health related information on social media				
RQ4	Does the information obtained from social media influence preventive health practices of undergraduates at the university of Benin?				
12	The health information obtained from social media has increased my awareness of preventive health practices				
13	The health information obtained from social media has motivated me to adopt healthy behaviors				

14	The health information obtained from social media has not influenced my decision to seek medical attention when needed				
15	The health information obtained from social media has not increased my confidence in making informed decisions about my health				
16	The health information obtained from social media has not had a positive impact on my overall preventive health practices				
17	The health information obtained from social media has made me self-diagnose instead of consulting a healthcare professional				
18	The health information obtained from social media has caused me to doubt my healthcare provider's advice				
19	The health information obtained from social media has delayed me from seeking medical attention				
20	The health information obtained from social media often contradicts the health information gotten from a healthcare professional				