EVALUATION OF FACEBOOK PUBLICATIONS ABOUT LABOR AND BIRTH

AVALIAÇÃO DE PUBLICAÇÕES SOBRE PARTO E NASCIMENTO NO FACEBOOK

EVALUACIÓN DE PUBLICACIONES DE FACEBOOK SOBRE TRABAJO DE PARTO Y NACIMIENTO

Tamiris Ana Lyana Pereira Oliveira Lima, Lydia Vieira Freitas dos Santos, Isabelly Gomes de Oliveira, Vanessa Kelly da Silva Lima, Leilane Barbosa de Sousa

ABSTRACT

Objective: to critically evaluate the content of publications about labor and childbirth on the Facebook social network. Method: a quantitative and descriptive study was carried out in Brazil, between March and April 2019. Eight pages were chosen, and the last five publications on labor and birth were selected and critically analyzed. An instrument was used to verify the influence of publications on the choice of the delivery route, agreement with the literature of the content of the publications, types of publication, period of posts, location of page creators, and repercussions. The data were tabulated using Microsoft Excel® 2016. Results: 40 publications, only three did not have characteristics that could indicate a specific delivery route, 28 influenced normal delivery, ten had a scientific basis, and 34 were following the literature. Conclusion: most publications were in agreement with the literature. As for the repercussions, despite the high number of likes and shares, few comments were found. Such information can build closer relationships between technology and health to make Facebook an ally in health promotion.
RESUMO

Objetivo: avaliar criticamente conteúdos de publicações sobre parto e nascimento em páginas sobre o assunto na rede social Facebook. Método: estudo quantitativo, descritivo, realizado no Brasil, entre março e abril de 2019. Elegeram-se oito páginas e selecionaram-se as cinco últimas publicações sobre parto e nascimento, analisadas criticamente, de acordo com instrumento que buscou verificar influência das publicações na escolha do tipo de parto; concordância com a literatura dos conteúdos das publicações; tipos de publicações; período das postagens; localização dos criadores das páginas; e repercussões das publicações. Os dados foram tabulados pelo Microsoft Excel® 2016. Resultados: das 40 publicações, apenas três não apresentavam características que pudessem indicar um tipo de parto específico, 28 influíam sobre o parto normal, dez apresentavam embasamento científico e 34 estavam de acordo com a literatura. Conclusão: a maioria das publicações estavam em concordância com a literatura; quanto às repercussões, apesar do grande número de curtidas e compartilhamentos, observaram-se poucos comentários. Tais informações podem ser utilizadas na construção de estreitamento de relações entre a tecnologia e a saúde, a fim de tornar o Facebook um aliado na promoção da saúde.

Descritores: Enfermagem; Tecnologia da informação; Mídias sociais; Parturition.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: evaluar críticamente el contenido de las publicaciones sobre trabajo de parto y nacimiento en la red social Facebook. Método: se realizó un estudio cuantitativo y descriptivo en Brasil, entre marzo y abril de 2019. Se eligieron ocho páginas y se seleccionaron y analizaron críticamente las últimas cinco publicaciones sobre trabajo de parto y nacimiento. Se utilizó un instrumento para verificar la influencia de las
publicaciones en la elección de la opción de parto, concordancia con la literatura del contenido de las publicaciones, tipos de publicación, período de publicaciones, ubicación de los creadores de páginas y repercusiones. Los datos se tabularon utilizando Microsoft Excel® 2016. **Resultados:** de las 40 publicaciones, solo tres no tenían características que pudieran indicar un tipo de parto específico, 28 influyeron en el parto normal, diez tenían una base científica y 34 seguían la literatura. **Conclusión:** la mayoría de las publicaciones coincidieron con la literatura. En cuanto a las repercusiones, a pesar de la gran cantidad de likes y compartidos, se encontraron pocos comentarios. Esta información puede construir relaciones más estrechas entre la tecnología y la salud para hacer de Facebook un aliado en la promoción de la salud.

**Descripciones:** Enfermería; Tecnología de la Información; Medios de Comunicación Sociales; Parto.

---

1,2,4,5 University for International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony/UNILAB. Redenção (CE), Brazil.  
3 Federal University of Ceará/UFC. Fortaleza (CE), Brazil.  

*Article extracted from the Undergraduate Thesis <<Evaluation of labor and birth publications on Facebook>>. University for International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony/UNILAB, 2019.*

How to cite this article  

INTRODUCTION
Each year, there are about three million births in Brazil, involving approximately six million people, which means that birth influences a significant portion of the Brazilian population each year considering families and the social environment\(^1\).

The improvement of medicine has profoundly transformed childbirth assistance. Such events have become increasingly dependent on technologies and centered on the physician, leaving behind the figure of conventional midwives, and increasing the number and popularity of cesarean sections\(^2\).

In Brazil, from 2000 to 2010, cesarean rates increased in all regions of the country. Due to the high occurrence and the current discussions around the reasons and implications involved, it has become a challenge for public health to decrease such rates given the popularization of this surgical procedure\(^3\).

Over the past 20 years, the Ministry of Health, inspired by the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), has been implementing public policies to give women back the protagonism of childbirth, making it more humanized, and removing the country from the scenario in which more than half of births occur by cesarean sections, mostly elective\(^2\).

Humanized childbirth is based on an association of conducts and procedures that favor pregnancy, labor, and healthy birth. It understands the natural process and avoids unnecessary or risky practices for the mother and baby, strengthening the woman's autonomy in a dignified way\(^4\). The role of nursing in the humanized childbirth is to provide healthcare using judgement free attitudes based on dialogue and empathy, welcoming women and their families, providing guidance and information on the conducts to be adopted, and valuing the parturient by respecting her rights and needs\(^5\). This type of assistance is the most efficient way to reduce the risks to which the mother and the newborn can be exposed.
With the expansion of the internet and the ease of access in a democratic way (as it is now available to all classes), social networks have become conducive to the development of exchanges of experiences and information about the moment of childbirth in the lives of women. It should be added that, in Brazil, 54% of Facebook users are female.

Pregnant women searching for information about childbirth are looking for a better understanding of the moment they and their family are going through to feel more secure and empowered since the experiences lived during this period can leave memories for the rest of their lives.

The internet has revolutionized society due to information transmission characteristics, broadcasting news and knowledge about the most diverse subjects, ranging from politics and economics to entertainment and health, to the real world. Social networks entered people’s daily lives due to the high capacity to disseminate information in different social classes.

The expressive use of information and communication technologies has influenced the human experience in several ways. Social networks such as Facebook are considered a success by the public and a field for the various forms of interaction and sociability online. Much more than joining users around common interests, these groups create interactions with different purposes, and one of the main characteristics of virtual communities is the exchange of information between members.

Empowerment can assist decision making, save time and resources. However, this autonomy can generate risks, such as self-diagnosis. Therefore, it is necessary to have the competence to understand such information.

**OBJECTIVE**

To critically evaluate the content of publications about labor and childbirth on the Facebook social network.
METHOD

This is a quantitative, descriptive, observational study, carried out in Brazil, between March and April 2019, which consisted of a critical evaluation of Facebook publications about labor and childbirth, including the influence of these publications on the delivery route choice, agreement with the literature, types of publications, period of the posts, location of page creators, and repercussions.

To select the content, initially, a search was done for Facebook pages that met the following criteria: presenting content focused on childbirth, contents written in Portuguese, number of followers $\geq$ 10,000 people, and posts having comments or likes. After applying these criteria, eight pages were chosen.

Of the eight chosen pages, the last five publications on labor and childbirth were selected, generating 40 publications for analysis. For a critical evaluation of the posts, a verification instrument was built by the authors and used, which listed the following topics:

- Influence of the posts on the delivery route choice and agreement with the literature: the post influences the choice of type of delivery (normal, cesarean, or both), has a scientific basis, and is in line with the relevant literature.

- Types of publications, period of posts, and location of the creators of the pages: repost or authorial publication, reports lived experiences, date of posts, and origin (region of the country) of the pages' creators.

- Repercussions of the publications: number of comments in agreement, presence of doubts regarding the subject, presence of comments expressing similar experiences, tagging of people in the posts, and number of likes and shares.

A table was produced for each selected page to organize the topics contained in the instrument specifying the publications, the presence of a scientific basis, agreement with
the literature, the type of publication, the influence on the delivery route choice (normal, cesarean section, or both), number of comments in agreement, doubts, similar experiences, and tagging, in addition to the number of likes and shares.

After a critical analysis of each page, a table was filled out containing the detailed information, the pages' name, and the country's region. Such data were tabulated using Microsoft Excel® 2016.

The survey was conducted using information available on the social network Facebook, with no direct contact and communication with the network administrators and users. According to Resolution No. 510, of April 7, 2016, which provides ethical issues in research with human beings, research that uses publicly accessible information is waived from review by an Ethics and Research Committee.

RESULTS

The results of the present study are outlined as follows:

Influence of the publications on the delivery route choice

Of the 40 publications, only three did not have characteristics that could indicate a specific delivery route. Although these three publications did not present clear and specific information about which type of delivery a woman should choose, the potential for dissemination and the strong appeal of the pages' administrators to reach the target audience were evidenced. It is important to note that information about the administrators was not found satisfactorily on the pages, as they presented a succinct and, at times, non-existent characterization.

There was a prevalence in the number of publications on normal childbirth (28). While publications about cesarean sections (1) reached a minimum percentage, showing that this type of delivery, due to its implications, should be performed according to the recommendations to avoid further complications (Figure 1).
Figure 1. Posts with influence on the type of delivery. Redenção (CE), Brazil, 2019.

Agreement with the literature

Regarding the agreement of the posts analyzed with the literature, ten publications had a scientific basis, referred to the data sources or cited regulatory bodies, and had truthful statistics on the subject.

In six publications of the 40 analyzed, it was not possible to verify agreement with the literature, as they were messages of empowerment, videos of childbirth, and photos of moments of relaxation and tenderness. The remaining posts (34) were in agreement with the relevant literature.

Type of publication, period of posts, and location of the pages' creators

The studies were similar concerning the type of publication. The number of reposts (21) — publications in which the administrator shares/replies from other pages or people, was significantly higher than the authorial posts (19) — those in which the administrator himself produces the content (Figure 2).
Still, concerning publication, 14 posts revealed experiences lived by followers and/or administrators.

Concerning the dates of the publications, a discrepancy in periodicity was found, as there were pages that kept the publications updated and recent. Of the eight pages analyzed, six were published in 2019. On the other hand, others delayed updating the content, despite having high numbers of followers (Figure 3).
Figure 3. Period of the posts. Redenção (CE), Brazil, 2019.

Regarding the location of the pages' creators, there was a slight concentration of publications originated in the Southeast region (Rio de Janeiro -1 and São Paulo - 1) and in the Midwest (Distrito Federal - 2, Goiás - 1, Mato Grosso - 1). As this is an observational study, two pages' origin was not determined (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Origin of the analyzed pages. Redenção (CE), Brazil, 2019.

**Repercussion of publications**

Regarding the impact that the posts analyzed have, it was found that there were few comments compared to the large number of likes and shares. From the comments present, there was a small number related to doubts regarding the posts' theme, while the number of tagging in these publications was greater than 50% of the total comments, as shown in Chart 1.
Chart 1. Data on the repercussions of the posts. Redenção (CE), Brazil, 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent comments</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments with questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments reporting experiences</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments with tags</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total comments</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total likes</td>
<td>2,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total shares</td>
<td>1,1125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

The interest of pregnant women in childbirth matters indicates the potential influence of internet pages. Pregnant women looking for information about labor and childbirth are willing to achieve a better understanding of the moment they and their family are going through to feel more secure and empowered. Therefore, these pages need to be in line with the scientific literature, as wrong information can lead women to fail in choices and in what they deem relevant to the parturition process.

The choice of the type of delivery is a moment of anxiety and questions, in which the previous experience plays a fundamental role. Besides, many pregnant women are afraid of the labor. One reason for this fear is the scarcity of information about labor.

Currently, the large number of publications on normal childbirth on social networks points to the need to disseminate the benefits of this delivery route and encourage humanization practices in public and private health services. This happens in contrast to the fact that the number of cesarean deliveries in Brazil is increasing in all regions of the
country\textsuperscript{3}. The choice for cesarean delivery can be justified by negative experiences in normal childbirth, desire to perform tubal ligation, insecurity in local assistance, and previous positive experience\textsuperscript{13}.

Although the indication of the delivery route should be based on consistent clinical reasons and specific situations\textsuperscript{13}, the preference of the pregnant woman is built from self-knowledge, experiences, and knowledge that passes between her and the community where she lives, as well as expectations, and are influenced by the access to information gathered during pregnancy\textsuperscript{14}.

The search for the humanization of the parturition process must be constant, advancing in the realization and consolidation of the woman's participation in decision-making about the birth, as it is necessary to guarantee safe motherhood and birth, with the active participation of the woman and family in the whole process of gestating, giving birth, and being born\textsuperscript{15}.

In the social network scenario, nurses can also play the role of health educators, as these tools act as a platform for communication and support between individuals who go through a certain situation, such as, in this case, pregnancy\textsuperscript{16}. The nurse has the responsibility to transmit security to the woman, who will make the best decision for the child's birth\textsuperscript{17}.

Nursing care during labor and delivery also goes beyond traditional techniques. It includes welcoming, respect, bonding, a peaceful environment, non-pharmacological methods for pain relief, and, above all, effective communication, so that the guidelines allow the empowerment of women aiming at best practices and a satisfactory and safe parturition process\textsuperscript{18}.

Information on the types of delivery, risks, and benefits is a right of pregnant women provided by the Global Alliance for Safe Motherhood\textsuperscript{13}. Therefore, the nurse must clarify
the doubts and questions of the pregnant women during the prenatal period to empower them, considering that many women do not feel safe to decide which type of delivery they wish and, thus, expect health professionals (whether a doctor or a nurse) to help them in making the best choice.

The choice of the type of delivery can also be influenced by other factors, such as the possibility of pain and fear resulting from this fact, which are also relevant and influential aspects of childbirth choices. For most women, such remarkable and significant experiences, such as pregnancy and childbirth, can have consequences for the puerperium and significantly influence their lives and motherhood.

The study findings also show that most of the pages' contents were following the literature, but referencing the publications is still not a concern of the administrators. This can be justified by the fact that social media is an environment of relaxation, in detriment of giving credits to scholars of a given subject.

The scarcity of scientific references in Facebook publications is worrying. This social network is the starting point for both professionals and scientists to expand dissemination. However, adequate scientific textualization must be applied to all information, with the transposition of scientific language into colloquial language and systematization of disclosures, mainly through advice from research institutions and universities, which are the research granaries.

Scientific knowledge must be based on other types of knowledge. This characteristic defines information society, in which previous studies stimulate new research in a permanent process. Science, although is produced by extremely competent people, is also concrete for everyone as it influences, modifies, and becomes necessary, especially in everyday issues.
Concerning the type of publication, a balance was identified between reposts and authorial publications, which demonstrates that the administrators present themselves as producers of information and as important disseminators of the information. The publications also revealed experiences lived by the page administrators themselves and followers encouraging other women through their own experiences. This interaction occurs because social networks are social media that provide information, ideas, and interests.

Regarding the repercussions, the data showed that, in comparison with a high number of likes and shares, there were few comments, mainly related to doubts about the content, which can be a disturbing factor that motivates reflection on how information is being received and what remains of this knowledge, since these comments do not add information. However, these comments endorse information already mentioned, thus demonstrating the lack of discussions.

The interactivity promoted through likes and shares is a positive result, as it can boost the dissemination of information, advertisements, data, and research results on social networks, using the multimedia tools that are available.

Regarding the high number of people tagging in the comments, it was noticed that women act as multiplying agents, as they not only read the content but, when making comments or tagging, promote the dissemination of information to other women. Therefore, the interactivity provided by social media and the respective wide dissemination power transform these women into key pieces for the dissemination of knowledge related to labor and childbirth.

Another positive point about the high number of shares is that a Facebook page open to followers and non-followers makes it possible to view search engines. Thus, the Internet
user who is inserted in the social network can share contents with friends and groups and publish them in other digital media, further increasing the reach\textsuperscript{23}.

No studies were found in the literature that deals with the impact of comments on publications. However, it is believed that the low number of comments is worrisome, especially because there were doubts about the theme covered by the publications, which may indicate disinterest or even lack of public confidence in the pages.

The fact is that, on social networks, the act of publishing becomes more than just making contents available, but it results in a way of interacting and disseminating information of interest to each other. Among the results and benefits of using Facebook, it is highlighted that this social network can be useful as a communication and support platform between individuals with similar interests\textsuperscript{16}. Facebook is an open space that makes it possible to share experiences, thus, it is considered a successful medium among the various forms of online interaction\textsuperscript{9}.

Among the limitations of the study, a reduced number of pages was identified due to the time allotted for the selection of pages. Besides, the study was carried out only in Brazilian pages, which is a limited sample of the social media universe. However, these findings contribute to the deepening of social networks' use in the health education process, which is so relevant today.

**CONCLUSION**

Most publications analyzed agreed with the literature. Regarding the repercussions, despite the high number of likes and shares, there were few comments. Such information can be used to build closer relationships between technology and health to make Facebook an ally to help women during the prenatal period, clarifying doubts about labor and childbirth without replacing prenatal care performed by trained health professionals, who provide all the assistance that this moment requires.
As nurses are present throughout the prenatal period and are in close contact with pregnant women, it is their responsibility to clarify doubts and emphasize to women that the use of social media should not be a priority during this period, thus, reinforcing the importance of the professional monitoring.

Thus, when considering the limitations and the results found, new studies about the theme must be carried out, aiming at a broader evaluation, and looking for pages with local administrators to obtain more reliable results regarding the repercussions of the publications.

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

All authors also contributed in the conception of the article, collection, analysis and discussion of the data, as well as in the writing and critical review of the content with intellectual contribution and in the approval of the final version of the study.

**CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

Nothing to declare.

**REFERENCES**


2. Riscado LC, Jannotti CB, Barbosa RHS. Deciding the route of delivery in Brazil: themes and trends in public health production. Texto&contextoенferm [Internet]. 2016 [cited


12. Masoumi SZ, Kazemi F, Oshvandi K, Jalali M, Esmaeili-Vardanjani A, Rafiei H. Effect of Training Preparation for Childbirth on Fear of Normal Vaginal Delivery and Choosing the Type of Delivery Among Pregnant Women in Hamadan, Iran: A Randomized Controlled
doi:
https://doi.org/10.5216/ree.v19.44139


23. Sá KM, Freire A, Caetano F, Magalhães, Cavalcante SMA, Bandeira MAM. Mídias Sociais como ferramenta de apoio às práticas integrativas em saúde na área de plantas
medicinais. Vittalle[Internet]. 2018 [cited 2019 May 01]; 30 (1): 151-144. Available from: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/720a/13bec1c74c4c553c83118854f4254d3e20b0.pdf

Correspondence

Vanessa Kelly da Silva Lima
E-mail: vanessa.kelly902@gmail.com

Submission: 05/22/2020
Accepted: 01/20/2021

Copyright © 2021 Journal of Nursing UFPE on line/JNUOL.
This is an open access article distributed under the CC BY 4.0 assignment Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, which allows others to distribute, remix, adapt and create from their work, even for commercial purposes, as long as they give it due credit for the original creation. It is recommended to maximize the dissemination and use of licensed materials.