Negative Effects of Online Health Forums on User’s Health

Ali Ahmed
Dakota State University
Ali.Ahmed@trojans.dsu.edu

Tareq Nasralah
Dakota State University
Tareq.Nasralah@trojans.dsu.edu

Hassan Alyami
Dakota State University
Shuyuan.Deng@dsu.edu

Shuyuan Deng
Dakota State University
Shuyuan.Deng@dsu.edu

Abstract

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in usage and acceptance of online health forums. More and more people are searching their health problem online and posting their symptoms on online health forums. This study analyzed the impact of online health forums on the symptoms of individuals living with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). The Irritable Bowel Syndrome is commonly associated with stomach related problems and affects 9-22% of US population. It’s a chronic illness in which symptoms of a patient worsen with stress and anxiety. Therefore, we are hypothesizing that the symptoms of an IBS patient may worsen with the use of online health forums. The patient may have negative effects on his/her health by interacting with other users while using online forums. The study would also highlight the consequences of dissemination of incorrect information over the internet and how users relate their symptoms to other users while using online forums. We are currently analyzing the available literature on the topic and contemplating to find an innovative methodology to conduct this research. We are mainly looking for feedback on our research idea, methodology, and implications of such cross-disciplinary research in the field of information systems.