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Epidemiology News

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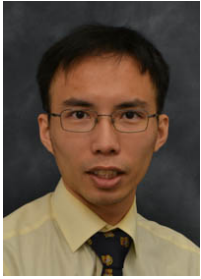
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Ebola and Social Media

December 22, 2014



A collaborative study including Dr. Isaac Chun-Hai Fung, assistant professor of epidemiology, at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, Georgia Southern University studies [Ebola and the Social Media](#). During heightened news coverage about cases of Ebola in the USA, anecdotal observations suggested that many Americans were anxious about Ebola. Given the negligible risk of infection, their anxiety was arguably driven by perceived rather than actual risk. Published in *The Lancet*, the correspondence shows how worldwide traffic on Twitter and Google about Ebola increased as news spread about the domestic US cases and how they compare with influenza-related searches and tweets. Twitter data can provide public health practitioners with a quantitative indicator of anxiety, anger, or negative emotions in the general public where Twitter penetration is high. This indicator could help public health practitioners to alleviate anxiety and correctly communicate the risk associated with Ebola.

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