

9-11-2015

Epidemiology News

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Epidemiology News" (2015). *Epidemiology News (through 6/2018)*. 32.
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Georgia Southern Examines Social Media Reactions

September 11, 2015



Social Media platforms have become increasingly useful in digital disease surveillance, and for health communication with the public. A team led by Dr. Isaac Chun Hai Fung of Georgia Southern University, identified five categories of information that increased Chinese microblog traffic pertaining to infectious diseases: (1) news of an outbreak or a case; (2) health education / information; (3) alternative health information / Traditional Chinese Medicine; (4) commercial advertisement / entertainment; and (5) social issues.

Chinese microblogs in 2012 regarding 42 infectious diseases were obtained through a keyword search in the [Weiboscope](#) database. Qualitative content analysis was performed for the posts pertinent to each keyword of the day of the year with the highest daily count. Similar posts were manually grouped and coded.

“People tweet about infectious diseases for a variety of reasons,” said Isaac Fung. “A peak in a time series of microblog traffic data may not necessarily be related to an outbreak.”

“People may share their favorite herbal recipes for a disease; or they may support a petition to end discrimination against Hepatitis B virus carriers.”

“Whether one’s goal is to detect outbreaks or to educate the public about disease prevention through social media,” said Isaac, “We need to understand what they said on social media about these diseases in the first place.”

“Our study is just a tiny first step to better understand health-related information circulation on Chinese social media environment that is heavily regulated by the Chinese government.”

“[Chinese Social Media Reaction to Information about 42 Notifiable Infectious Diseases](#),” was published in PLOS ONE.

Dr. Isaac Chun-Hai Fung, assistant professor of epidemiology at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) at Georgia Southern University, was the lead author. Ms. Yi Hao, Ms. Jingxian Cai, Mr. Braydon James Schaible, graduate students at JPHCOPH; Mr. Yuchen Ying and Dr. Zion Tsz Ho Tse, at The University of Georgia; Miss Cynthia Mengxi Yu and Dr. King-Wa Fu, at The University of Hong Kong were co-authors.

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Georgia Southern Alumni as ASPPH/CDC Allan Rosenfield Fellow

September 11, 2015



In a few short days, Ms. Jessica Sexton, JPHCOPH MPH Epidemiology alumni, will be embarking on what will be an experience of a lifetime. As an ASPPH/CDC Allan Rosenfield fellow, she will be working through the Center for Global Health (CGH) in the Division of Global HIV/AIDS (DGHA) to continue the implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Her post is the Lilongwe, Malawi CDC office, which is heavily involved with multiple projects and coordinated program efforts with USAID as well as the Global Health Corps. She was one of over 2000 applicants for 1 of 32 fellowship opportunities across 13 countries.

Ms. Jessica Sexton writes, "I am beyond excited and humbled to be joining the efforts of international public health professionals as an ASPPH/CDC Allan Rosenfield Global Health fellow. It is an honor and privilege to join the brilliant minds of the CDC to address the HIV/AIDS crisis on a first-hand basis. It is my hope that this outstanding opportunity will allow me to develop the skills I have acquired as an MPH student and use epidemiological methods to continue Dr. Allan Rosenfield's vision and mission to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Malawi. We have such a wonderful program at JPHCOPH, I really hope to see more students join me in the future."

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