

# Social media sensationalism in the male infertility space: a mixed methodology analysis

**Kassandra E. Zaila**, Vadim Osadchiy, Robert H. Shahinyan, Jesse N. Mills, Sriram V. Eleswarapu

Division of Andrology, Department of Urology, David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Consortium for Health Activity on Social Media (CHASM), David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

## Background

- Male factor contributes to 60% of all cases of infertility.
- Social media platforms enfranchise infertile men to take an active role in their condition
- Social media provides anonymity absent from face-to-face encounters
- Health information online is readily accessible
- Urological conditions suffer from a spread of misinformation on social media

## Objectives

- Identify popular male infertility content on social media
- Assess the accuracy and quality of male infertility content on social media

## Methods

- BuzzSumo, a social media analytics tool used to identify the most shared male infertility content online
- Data from 4 different social media platforms:



- Content of links were graded for accuracy and labeled as accurate, misleading or inaccurate
- The level of user engagement was evaluated for all links.
- Engagement is defined as the total number of interactions that users have with a link including, “liking,” “commenting,” and “sharing” on social media



# Social media sensationalism in the male infertility space: a mixed methodology analysis

**Kassandra E. Zaila**, Vadim Osadchiy, Robert H. Shahinyan, Jesse N. Mills, Sriram V. Eleswarapu

Division of Andrology, Department of Urology, David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Consortium for Health Activity on Social Media (CHASM), David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Search Term	Number of Engagements				Total
	Facebook	Twitter	Pinterest	Reddit	
Sperm count	173,600	2,005	4	34,210	209,819
Sperm quality	57,010	247	0	7,400	64,657
Male fertility	61,300	1,261	8	417	62,986
Fertility in men	7,386	391	8	45,620	53,405
Male infertility	18,200	1,209	1	27	19,437
Sperm					
testosterone	7,261	594	3	4	7,862
Semen analysis	1,652	28	3	0	1,683
Sperm motility	1,011	121	0	23	1,155
<b>Total</b>	<b>327,420</b>	<b>5,856</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>87,701</b>	<b>421,004</b>

Source website	Misleading/Inaccurate	Accurate	Total
Scientific peer-reviewed journal	2	2	4
Medical center or hospital	0	1	1
News organization	9	10	19
Alternative media (e.g., blog)	12	16	28

## Results

- 56% of articles were graded as accurate and 44% as misleading or inaccurate
- No significant difference in engagement between accurate *versus* inaccurate/misleading links
- 24% of total engagements relied on studies using animal or insect models, and 90% of those links were misleading
- 90% of male infertility content online comes from non-peer-reviewed sources

## Discussion

- A few studies are tokenized and amplified to guide discussion on social media
- Online health interventions are needed to offer users men's health information that is both accurate, engaging, and tailored to the general public

