

Public health advertisements in times of crisis: which factors influence their effectiveness?

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Abstract

During pandemics, one of the main challenges for health professionals, public administrators and advertisers is to generate the desired public awareness on health issues and motivate towards the requisite preventive behaviors. Although a substantial body of relevant research exists, we have limited knowledge on the factors that impact the effectiveness of the health advertising message and its power to raise awareness and help change public health habits. Testing different health message appeals in social media, the present study empirically demonstrates that fear, animation, patients' testimonials, and celebrity endorsements have a strong positive influence on public health awareness, whereas the use of humor does not seem to have a significant impact in times of crisis. Findings can help both marketers and health organizations design effective advertising campaigns with a direct positive impact on public health.

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