



## Social Media: An Opportunity for Developing Countries to Change Healthy Behaviors

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### ABSTRACT

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Social media can be defined as Internet-based tools and platforms that allow individuals and communities to interact with each other and generate, publish, and share information, knowledge, ideas, and experiences [1]. Social media include different technological approaches such as blogs, microblogging (e.g., Twitter), social networking (e.g., Facebook), video- and file-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), e-games, and wikis [2].

Current statistics (Diagram 1) indicate that the use of social media has increased in recent years, so that the number of social media users has risen from 0.97 billion in 2010 to 2.46 billion in 2017, and this number is projected to reach 3.02 billion in 2021 [3]. Some features of social media, such as easy and comprehensive access, less government monitoring and control, and the possibility of two-way interactive communication when using it have made social media an attractive alternative to traditional media. This has led to a significant increase in the use of social media in developing countries [4].

health, and improve management of their health status [1]. The results of studies indicate that social media-based interventions, in developed countries, have been effective in changing healthy behaviors and improving health status [5]; the formation of habitual behaviors through these interventions may be reinforced, which prompts and facilitates the repetition of healthy behaviors. Furthermore, such interventions are economically cost-effective [2]. If interventions for changing healthy behaviors have been designed and implemented, using the principles and concepts of theories and behavioral change models, their chances of success will increase and the change in behavior will be stronger and more durable over time [6].

In conclusion, given the growing use of social media in developing countries and the limited financial resources in these countries, there is a good opportunity for health interventions to change healthy behaviors. That way, the interventions are developed, designed, and implemented, using social media based on the theories and behavior change models.

Number of Users in Billions

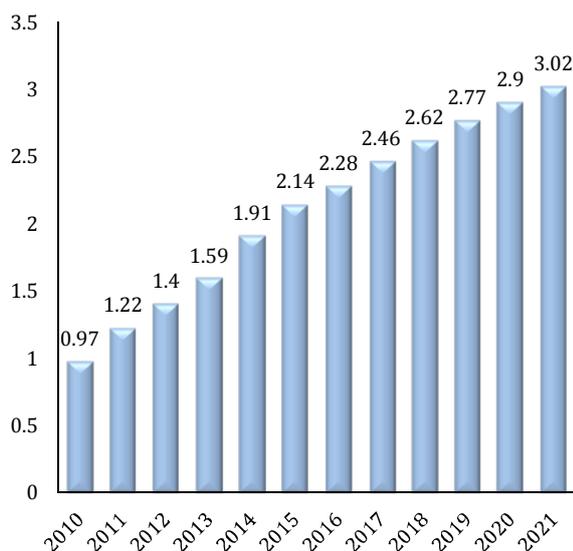


Diagram 1) Number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2021

On the other hand, social media has the potential to empower people to create a healthy lifestyle, make better and more informed decisions about their

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