

2022 | Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition Network

Webinar Report

Series 1/2022

Use of Social Media in Nutrition &
Physical Activity Promotion

23 August 2022 | Zoom Online Platform



Partner Societies/Associations:

Supported by Educational Grant from:



Executive Summary

A webinar on Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion was organised by Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network* on 23 August 2022 via Zoom online platform. The webinar provided a platform to share experience in using social media platforms for nutrition & physical activity promotion and communication in Southeast Asia (SEA) countries, discuss opportunities and challenges as well as explore strategies for effective use of such platforms for improved communication. In the first session, invited speakers from four SEA countries shared their experiences in promoting nutrition to the community using various social media platforms. In session 2, two invited speakers shared hands-on experiences and tips for effective nutrition and physical activity communication on social media.

*About SEA-PHN Network

Established on June 2014, the Network aims for a more effective implementation of public health nutrition measures to improve nutritional wellbeing of populations in the region. The current 5 members of the network, which are affiliated with the Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies (FANS) and the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) are Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia, Nutrition Society of Malaysia, Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc., Nutrition Association of Thailand and Vietnam Nutrition Association. More details of the Network are available on the Network website: <http://sea-phn.org>.

1. Introduction

Social media platforms have evolved to be important sources of information for the community, especially in the era of COVID-19 pandemic. Such platforms provide great opportunities for nutrition professionals to promote healthy eating and share evidence-based nutrition and physical activity information with increased visibility and being able to reach out to more audiences.

However, the surge of misinformation and fake news circulation on social media following the COVID-19 pandemic also pose a challenge in nutrition and health communication via such platforms. Additionally, there are competing voices on the platforms from some influencers with misleading and unsubstantiated solutions to health and nutrition concerns. It is vital that nutrition professionals adopt effective strategies to reach target audience while delivering consistent and accurate food and nutrition messages.

With the objectives of enabling nutritionists in the region to share respective country's experiences in promoting nutrition and physical activity through social media, and also to learn strategies for effective communication on social media platforms, the webinar on Use of Social Media in Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion was organised by the SEA-PHN Network.

The webinar was attended by 210 participants including nutritionists, dietitians, members of academia, research organisations, policy makers, public health workers, nutrition graduates and postgraduate students, medical doctors as well as other healthcare professionals.

This report summarises the presentations and discussions during the webinar. A compilation of the strategies and tips for nutrition and physical activity promotion on social media platforms are provided at the Appendix section of this report.

2. Welcome Remarks

Welcome Remarks

Dr Tee E Siong, Chairman of SEA-PHN Network and President of Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Dr Tee E Siong, chairman of SEA-PHN Network delivered the welcome address to participants of the webinar. He briefly introduced the theme and objective of the webinar to the participants. He expressed that the roles of social media in the promotion of nutrition and physical activities especially during the 2-3 years of the pandemic have become paramount since on-ground activities have been curtailed during the pandemic.

He briefly introduced the two sessions of the Webinar:

- Session 1 – Sharing of experiences by nutritionists/experts from four SEA countries on the use of social media in nutrition & physical activity promotion
- Session 2 – Sharing by two invited speakers on effective tips/ do's and don't's for nutrition and physical activity communication on social media

Wearing the hat of the Network's chairman, he also shared with the audiences the background of the SEA-PHN Network and some updates on upcoming activities by the Network, including the 1st SEA Public Health Nutrition Leadership Programme Workshop in October 2022 and the Webinar on Promotion & Consumers Understanding of Food Based Dietary Guidelines in November 2022.

3. Session 1 - Presentations on Social Media and Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion: Experiences in SEA Countries

Chairperson: Mrs Maria Lourdes A.Vega, Executive Director, Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines

Presentation 1:

Webinar on Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion: Experiences in Malaysia

Speaker: Ms Gui Shir Ley, Nutritionist, State Health Department of WP Labuan, Ministry of Health Malaysia.

Sharing experiences and activities from Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), Ms Gui Shir Ley presented the challenges, lesson learnt, strategies opportunities for nutrition promotion through various social media platforms. It was shared that up to 89% of the population in Malaysia used social media platforms for communication, and that the most-used platforms include Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram.

Sharing the opportunities for nutrition promotion, Ms Gui highlighted that virtual platforms help to reach wider coverage with no limit in the number of participants and boundaries, and that the resources required are also lower compared to physical activities. Among the activities and content delivered by MOH via social media platforms include:

- I. Online Nutrition Services to tackle double burden of malnutrition for individuals of all groups
- II. Social Media Activities
 - The Breastfeeding Series which focused on healthy eating during confinement and tips for working mothers during confinement period
 - The Gestational Weight Gain and Complementary Food Series
 - The Picky Eater Series
 - The Anemia Series which primarily focused on the risk of anemia among pregnant mothers and childrens
 - The Recipe Series for sharing of healthy recipes and tips to cook healthily
 - The Foods & Vegetables Series to promote fruits and vegetables consumption
 - The Local Series with specified languages which is easier for the public or target population to understand
 - The Myth Series

- The COVID Series to educate on healthy eating and ways to increase the immunity
- The Food Pyramid Series which introduced and educated the public on the New Food Pyramid 2021
- The Festive Series which educated on healthy eating during festive seasons
- The CPD Series on a weekly basis and the Online Training Series for both the public and health care professionals (HCPs)

Ms Gui also provided some insights on strategies for communication improvement, such as focus on:

- Preparation work before and after the activities
- Knowing the target audience
- Selection of topics e.g. catchy titles, panels invited
- Strategies to attract crowds
- Measurement of effectiveness and identify improvement strategies for next activity using the P-D-C-A (plan-do-check-act) cycle method

Discussing the challenges for the use of such platforms for nutrition promotion, Ms Gui highlighted issues including unstable internet, limited topics, lack of 2 way communication, equipment, retention rate and time and effort for preparation.

Ms Gui concluded her presentation by sharing some lessons learnt from MOH's experiences, underscoring the importance of creativity in the use of social media platforms for nutrition promotion, and that it is important to come up with interesting topics and creative ways to deliver those key messages to the public. The number of participation should also be taken into consideration when planning an online activity. Lastly, with the COVID-19 now becoming endemic, hybrid methods should be considered in order to provide an opportunity for wider public engagement.

Presentation 2:

Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion: Philippine Perspective

Speaker: Ms Fabiola Allysa L. Bringas, RND, Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines

Ms Fabiola introduced the potential of social media platforms for nutrition and physical activity promotion in view of the long average amount of time spent by internet users on these platforms (i.e. 10.27 hours per day in Philippines alone).

It was shared that in Philippine context, Facebook communities are very welcoming of nutrition information, and that the primary social media platform used in the Philippines for nutrition promotion are Facebook and Youtube. Several social media initiatives that have been taken by Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines include employment of the services of a social media strategist and enabling the messenger automation function for inquiries.

Sharing the lessons learned from various activities on virtual platforms, Ms Fabiola highlighted several points for more effective use of these platforms, including:

- Having a framework for planning content, i.e. the use of content calendar, posting database
- Use of tools/technologies for planning, social listening and performance monitoring; such as Meta Analysis, Trello , Google Sheets and Canva Premium
- Verification of information and content to establish credibility, and the importance to be aware of credible sources of information
- Engaging different personalities to help attracting a wider range of audiences
- Utilisation of optimum posting schedules
- Take care of mental health of those managing social media

In terms of challenges of the use of social platforms for nutrition and activity promotion, Ms Fabiola shared several issues to be addressed:

- Lack of human resources and the possible needs to invest in campaign managers and social media strategists
- Time and effort to research and validate information
- Constant need to be creative and validate content
- Increased demand for timely content
- Engagement rate
- Increased nutrition and health-related inquiries

As a conclusion for her presentation, Ms Fabiola summarised some of the recommendations and strategies to overcome these challenges:

- Embrace, expand and syndicate various platforms of social media
- Always have a strategic framework for social media
- Understand target audiences' interest and make the messages appealing
- Keep the messages short and simple for the public (i.e. 30second to 1 minute content)
- Be clear and avoid jargons
- Get the help of advocates, ambassadors and influencers in promoting messages

Presentation 3:

Social Media Opportunities for Health Promotion and Awareness in Food and Nutrition in Thailand

Speaker: Asst Prof Dr Kansuda Wunjuntuk, Kasetsart University, Thailand.

Asst Prof Dr Kansuda Wunjuntuk started her presentation by enlightening the participants on how social media is frequently used in spreading fake news to the public. She also stated that the Nutrition Association of Thailand (NAT) is very particular in promoting the right and credible nutrition message to the community through the digital platform. In order to ensure the validity of the content, the information

was reviewed, discussed and approved by the Public Response Team of the NAT before being shared with the public.

It was shared that the types of content for social media that were shared by NAT includes infographics, videos and E-books/E-articles. Most of the contents were shared through NAT's official website, Facebook and Youtube channel.

Among the contents developed and shared with the public include:

- Infographics for food and nutrition issues (i.e. rice and carbohydrate intake, durian consumption, clean food, egg consumption, oil consumption)
- Infographics for healthy lifestyle promotion (i.e. vegetables and fruit consumption, child obesity reduction, the Pantry of Sharing or Pansuk Pantry and Cannabis situation in Thailand)
- Video series such as:
 - Facts about Thai street food with food safety
 - Ketogenic diet caution
 - Milk and cancer risk
 - Flour-less bakery
 - Not cleaning chicken before cooking?
 - Several videos on COVID-19 nutritional situation, impact on childhood, COVID-19 and excessive intake of Vitamin C and Vitamin D and COVID-19
- “Youtuber Kids, Presenting the dishes of Vegetables and Fruits Campaign” to promote consumption of fruits and vegetables among children
- E-books and e-articles for the public on NAT website such as the Food & Nutrition E-Book, Manual E-Book for assessing and monitoring the nutritional status of early childhood, and e-articles on healthy eating.

Presentation 4:

Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion: Experiences in Vietnam

Speaker: Assoc Prof Dr Bui Thi Nhung, Vietnam Nutrition Association

Assoc Prof Dr Bui Thi Nhung presented the various platforms used in Vietnam for nutrition promotion such as Facebook, Instagram and also Twitter. Other platforms used for nutrition promotion in Vietnam are newspapers as well as television, and it was highlighted that television and cellphone are the main platforms used by the Vietnam population for accessing information. Assoc Prof Dr Nhung also highlighted the increasing use of Facebook and health monitoring and tracking apps among the population. Nutrition

education programme was also conducted in schools in which parents were educated on proper nutrition, preparation of healthy meals and encouraging physical activity for their childrens.

In order to further enhance the nutrition education and communication in Vietnam, initiatives have been taken by the Ministry of Health to establish regulations on the development of communication materials, as well as developing nutrition communication materials on the basis of 4.0 technology, under the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy on Nutrition to 2025.

The focus of the strategies highlighted include:

- building communication materials and supporting tools for nutrition counselling
- building the right nutrition advice and nutrition pyramid of all ages until 2030
- developing a set of standard messages on proper nutrition for different target groups
- developing materials and supporting softwares such as video tapes, nutrition counselling softwares
- developing electronic album illustrations of healthy nutrition practices at home, complications of a number of non-communicable diseases caused by unhealthy lifestyle
- developing communication materials for nutrition education and food safety for school age, parents and teachers
- developing and disseminating guidelines on proper nutrition, food safety and physical activity for specific subject groups
- developing communication materials on the role of nutrition labels on prepackaged foods
- building newspaper on nutrition information website using artificial intelligence technology with voices representing different parts of the nation
- developing of a set of video clips to guide the development of nutritional menus
- building smart nutrition consulting software to serve the community

Assoc Prof Dr Nhung ended her presentation by sharing the social communication and advocacy work on the National Strategy on Nutrition, such as media advocacy on nutrition labelling, and reducing the intake of unhealthy foods and beverages. She highlighted the important roles of social media in delivering healthy nutrition messages to the public to improve public health and reduce harm to the environment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Session 2 – Effective Nutrition and Physical Activity Communication on Social Media

Chairperson: Ms Cyndy Au, Global Regulatory Strategy Lead, IFF, Singapore

Presentation 1:

Consuming Health-related (Dis)information on Social Media

Speaker: Asst Prof Dr Alongkorn Parivudhipongs, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Asst Prof Dr Alongkorn's presentation included the aspects of health, health-related (dis)information, information or infodemic on social media and ideas for social media postings.

He discussed the 10 aspects of health which include nutrition, social, spiritual, physical, emotional, purposeful, environmental, occupational, fiscal and intellectual. Sharing the types of information available on different platforms, Asst Prof Dr Alongkorn discussed the differences between misinformation, disinformation and malinformation, and underscored the challenges to identify misinformation on social media. The different types of misinformation shared across social media were discussed and it was highlighted that repeated exposure to fake news and misinformation increases the impact on human health in the long run.

Dr Alongkorn also shared with the participants the concept of "Social Media Lifecycle" which comprises 10 factors to be considered for health-related promotion on social media platforms (see Appendix). Several factors that were highlighted include 'interaction and engagement' with the target groups on the social media platforms, 'validation' of the information shared and establish 'trust' for better acceptance of the information.

In conclusion, Dr Alongkorn shared several take home messages:

- The message or information delivered to the public is important and should be valid
- Social media is a tool for efficient information delivery to the target audience
- The audience or public is the key; information or message developed should meet the right target audience.

Presentation 2:

Nutrition and Physical Activity Communication on Social Media: Experiences from NSM Nutrition Roadshows 2.0 and Nutrition Month Malaysia

Speaker: Dr Roseline Yap Wai Kuan, Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Dr Roseline Yap shared the Nutrition Society of Malaysia's experiences in conducting nutrition and physical activity promotion via social media platforms (i.e. Facebook and Instagram) as well as the adaptations taken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the main nutrition promotion programmes that have been adapted for social media platforms include

- NSM Roadshows 2.0, with several virtual activities such as
 - Nutritionist's Kitchen (sharing of healthy recipes)
 - NSM Recipe Books Giveaways 2020
 - NSM Virtual Fun Run / Walk 2022
 - Healthy Nutrition Goals and Practices with NSM 2021
 - NSM Virtual Parent-Child Cooking Workshop and Competition for year 2021 & 2022
 - NSM Virtual Family Fun Run / Walk 2021
- Nutrition Month Malaysia (NMM) 2020-2022, which comprised several virtual approaches such as
 - Virtual fair official platform, with activities such as virtual interactive learning, games and redemption of goodies, expert videos and healthy cooking video series
 - Sharing of nutrition educational messages on NMM official Facebook and Instagram page
 - Electronic HEAL Magazine publication and e-educational press articles on website, as well as educational messages on selected radio stations

Dr Roseline Yap also highlighted the pros and cons of the use of social media in nutrition promotion. She then shared with the participants several social media tips or do's when promoting nutrition to the public:

- Keeping the message simple and concise
- Attractive graphic layout
- Videos should be short, with maximum length of 2 minutes with captions
- Ensure engaging activities
- Ensure relevancy of the information shared
- Providing information on emerging or current nutrition and health concerns
- Addressing common questions and health concerns of the public
- Direct followers to credible sources of information
- Reminding about common healthy eating practices
- Timing of the postings

Dr Roseline Yap concluded her presentation by discussing several approaches to increase the visibility on social media platforms (refer to Appendix for more details and tips for social media).

8. Pictorial Report

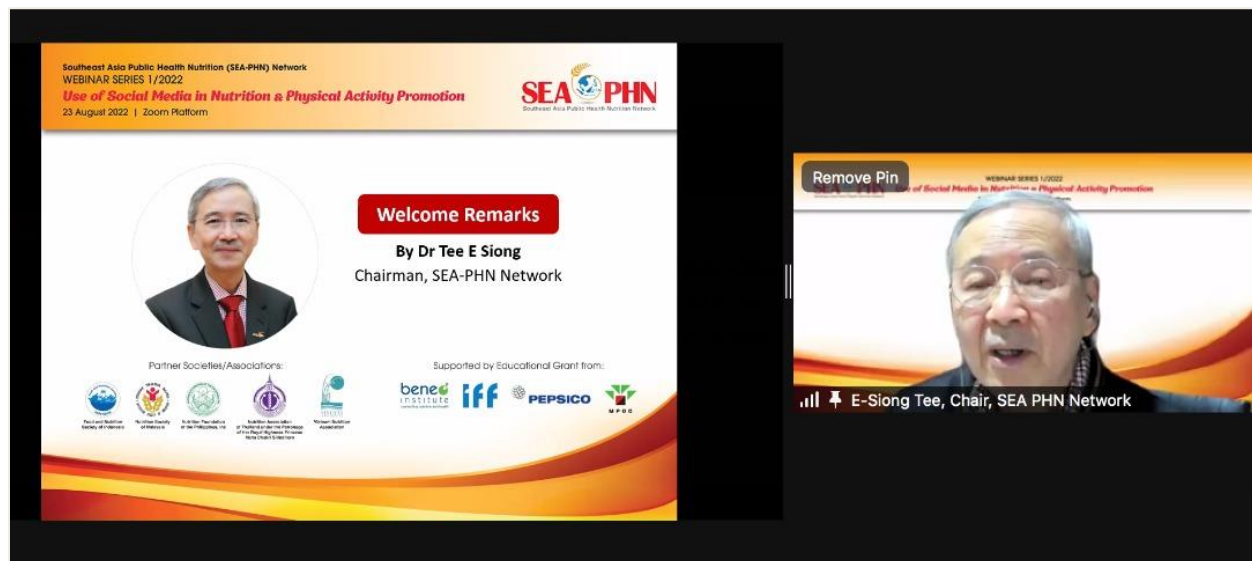


Figure 1. Dr Tee E Siong, Chairman of SEA-PHN Network gave his welcome remarks to the participants

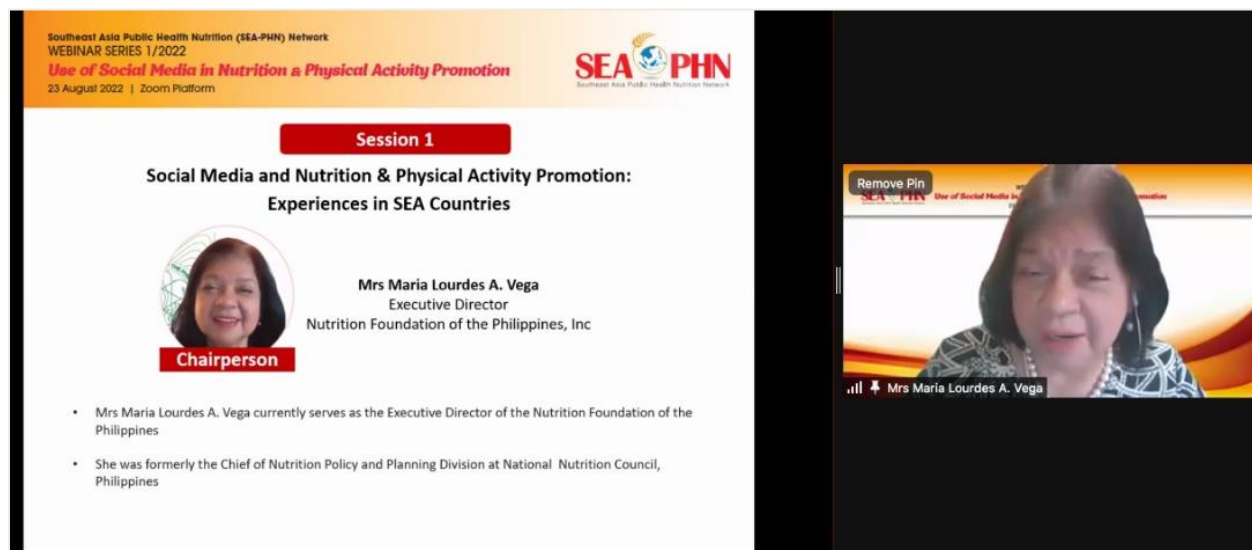


Figure 2. Mrs Maria Lourdes A.Vega chaired session 1 of the Webinar

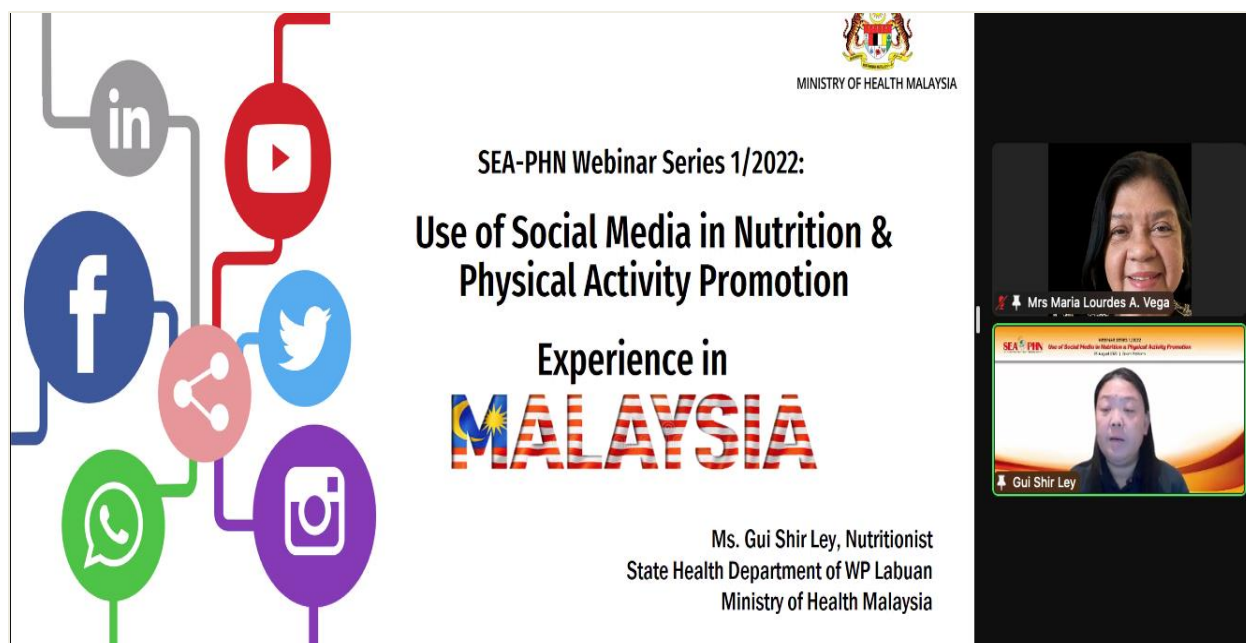


Figure 3. Ms Gui Shir Ley presented on Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion: Experiences in Malaysia

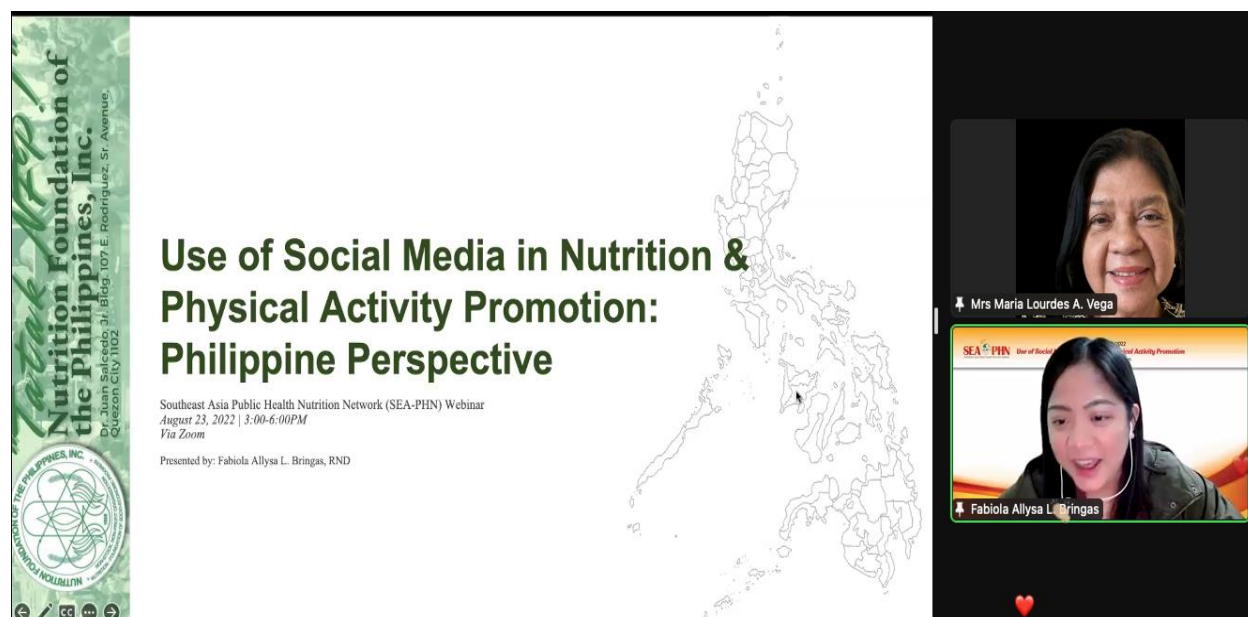


Figure 4. Ms Fabiola Allysa L. Bringas presented on Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion: Philippine Perspective



Figure 5. Asst Prof Dr Kansuda Wunjuntuk presented on Social Media opportunities for Health Promotion and Awareness in Food and Nutrition in Thailand



Figure 6. Assoc Prof Dr Bui Thi Nhung presented on Use of Social Media in Nutrition & Physical Activity Promotion: Experiences in Vietnam

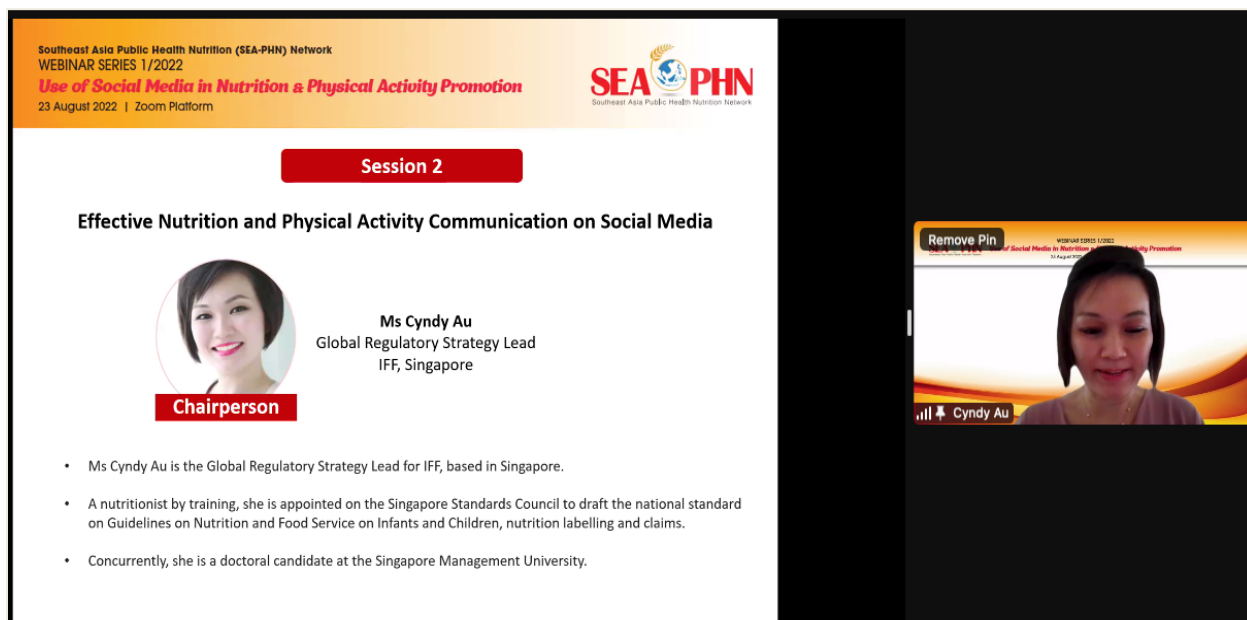


Figure 7. Ms Cyndy Au chaired session 2 of the Webinar



Figure 8. Asst Prof Dr Alongkorn Parivudhiphongs presented on Consuming health-related (dis)information on Social Media

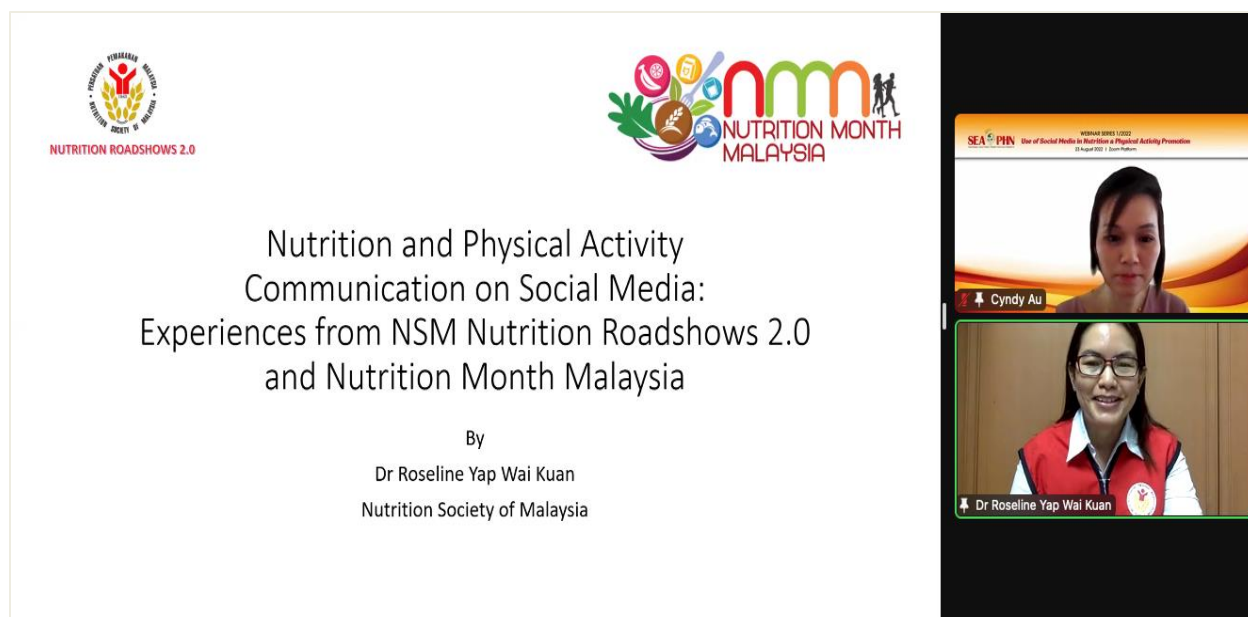


Figure 9. Dr Roseline Yap Wai Kuan presented on Nutrition and Physical Activity Communication on Social Media: Experiences from NSM Nutrition Roadshows 2.0 and Nutrition Month Malaysia

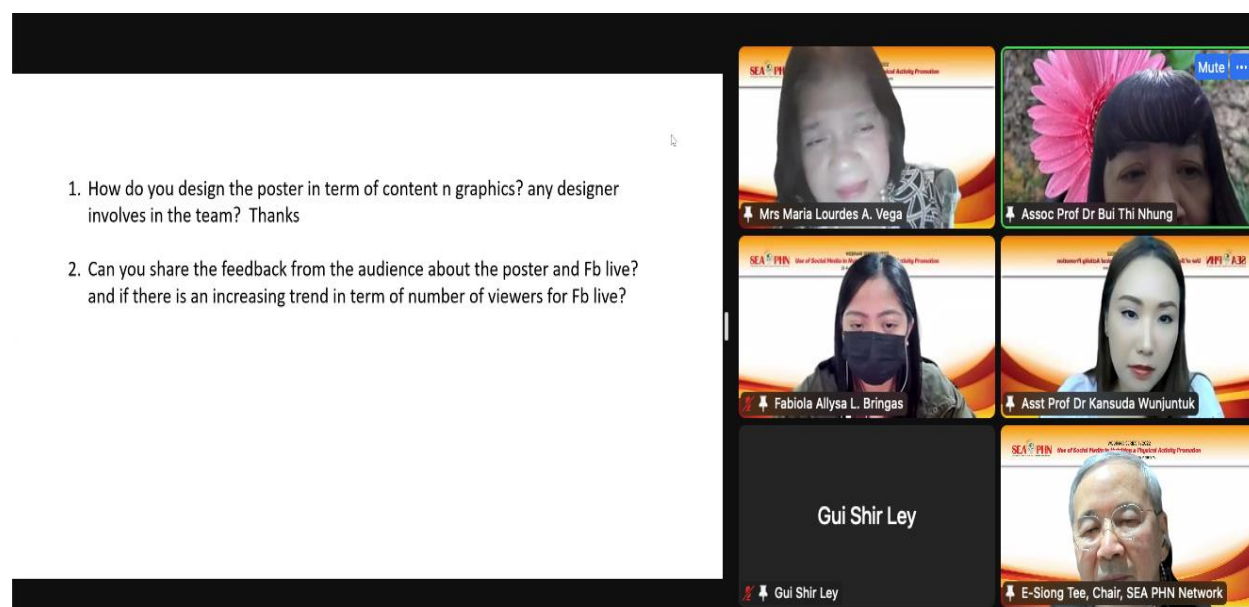


Figure 10. Q&A sessions with invited speakers after the presentations



Figure 11. Group photos of invited speakers, chairpersons, council and associate members of SEA-PHN Network and the Network secretariat

9. Acknowledgements

SEA-PHN Network would like to thank the Chairs of the webinar, all speakers for their presentations and sharing their views and thoughts during the Q&A and discussion sessions. The participation of all attendees of the Network is appreciated. The Network acknowledges the educational grant provided by BENEIO-Institute, IFF, PepsiCo Services Asia Co. Ltd and Malaysian Palm Oil Council to support SEA-PHN Network activities and to enable this webinar to be carried out. The Network also places on record its appreciation to all participants for attending the webinar.

Appreciation is also conveyed to Versacomm Sdn Bhd for serving as secretariat for the SEA-PHN Network and to organise the webinar.

Report prepared by:
Versacomm Sdn Bhd, Secretariat of SEA-PHN Network

Report vetted and approved by:
Dr Tee E Siong, Chairman of SEA-PHN Network

6 October 2022

10. Appendix

Compilation of strategies and tips for nutrition and physical activity promotion on social media platforms

A. Possible social media platforms for nutrition and physical activity promotion

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Telegram
- TikTok
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- Youtube channel
- LinkedIn
- WhatsApp
- WeChat
- Discord
- Snapchat
- Line
- Reddit

B. Strategies for social media posting, planning, execution and effectiveness improvement

- Understand the target audience
- Be creative in the selection of topics that are timely and relevant to the current issues/concerns of target audience; listen to what people want (interests) to make messages appealing; respond and engage
- Use of P-D-C-A (plan-do-check-act) cycle for measurement of effectiveness and identify improvement strategies for next activity
- Pay attention to nutrition relevant conversations – help to know how public is responding to a nutrition/health issue
- Enable 2 ways communication
- Utilise available tools for planning and monitoring of performance of posts such as
 - Meta business suite for scheduling posts and tracking metrics (engagements, reach, likes and reactions, comments)
 - Trello as organising platform for content
 - Google sheets for content calendar
 - Canva for graphic design – free premium Canva account is available for nonprofits organisations
- Develop a framework for planning content (i.e. content calendar, posting database, etc.)
- Get the information and content verified to establish credibility
- Be aware of credible sources of information

- Engaging different personalities to “hook” people may be helpful in increasing reach
- Capacitate the social media management team and consider their mental health
- Invest in campaign managers, community managers, graphic artists, and social media strategists
- Proper referral

C. Tips for social media postings and approaches to increase visibility

- Embrace social media; expand and syndicate various platforms
- Have a strategic framework for social media
- Keep messages simple, concise and short to account for people’s attention span (30 seconds-2 minutes)
- Consider language - be clear, use friendly voice and avoid jargons
- Use action lines or have a call to action; target behavior change
- Explore various media (i.e. videos, GIFs, infographics, etc.)
- Use social media to address misinformation
- Tap a specific group of people and partner with other stakeholders to build a chain/network of advocates who can help to promote messages
- Get ambassadors, influencers and champions to help with messages promotion
- Use of catchy titles
- Utilise nice graphics, right colours, animation and music
- Provide information on emerging/current nutrition & health concerns
- Address common questions/health concerns of the public
- Direct followers to credible sources of information
- Remind about common healthy eating practices
- Sharing of postings through hashtags# - makes it easier for audiences to find information with a theme or specific content
- Use video for a heavy topic
- Use pin and cover images to direct people to key information/update
- Timing of the postings - optimal days and time e.g. Wednesday, Friday, weekends
- Utilise ‘boosting’ function e.g. Facebook Ads
- Sharing/crosspost content across multiple Facebook pages/ groups e.g. nutritionists, parents
- Make use of Facebook Live session

D. Social Media Lifecycle – 10 factors to be considered for health-related promotion on social media platforms

Social media for health-related promotion



• Via Frédéric DEBAILLEUL, Sandrine Josso, Hélène Introvigne