# Nearly all fertility advice on social media found to be misleading or inaccurate, study shows



The prevalence of misinformation surrounding fertility on social media platforms, particularly Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), has raised alarming concerns among healthcare professionals. A recent study conducted by King’s Fertility examined 939 posts related to reproductive health and found that a staggering 99.8 per cent failed to meet standards for accuracy, credibility, quality, and readability. Lead authors Dr Ippokratis Sarris and Dr Kugajeevan Vigneswaran highlighted that this lack of reliable information poses significant risks to public health, especially during a pivotal phase in people’s lives where timely and accurate information is crucial.

The study revealed that nearly 45 per cent of the examined posts contained inaccurate information, while less than one in ten were deemed credible. The situation is compounded by the fact that almost half of the posts had clear commercial conflicts of interest, signalling that many might be motivated by profit rather than public welfare. Posts predominantly pushed lifestyle "hacks" or unfounded naturopathic advice, often lacking a scientific basis. Alarmingly, many of the sources of this content include individuals without any formal qualifications in healthcare, further complicating the landscape of fertility advice online.

Given that fertility treatment often hinges on precise biological timings, such misleading information can inadvertently delay care, pushing hopeful patients toward ineffective or even harmful alternatives. With social media becoming an increasingly popular forum for healthcare information, there is a growing need for clinicians and platforms alike to take a more proactive stance in rectifying the misinformation landscape. Dr Sarris underscores that patients are now more likely to turn to online platforms for health advice, which could lead to a disconnect and erosion of trust in professional medical guidance if online information contradicts that provided by healthcare practitioners.

This issue is not isolated to fertility; a broader examination of women's reproductive health online indicates a troubling trend of widespread misinformation. A narrative review published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine detailed 112 unique misleading claims across various topics like contraception and maternal health. The ramifications of such misinformation can affect health outcomes significantly, which calls for a concerted push towards evidence-based decision-making within digital spaces.

Moreover, studies have indicated that influencers promoting health information often lack the necessary scientific backing. Research led by the University of Sydney analysed posts related to controversial medical screenings and found that most of these lacked credible evidence, frequently prioritising promotional content driven by financial interests. This concern extends to platforms like TikTok, where over half of the examined fertility-related videos showcased non-evidence-based strategies, raising the need for greater vigilance regarding the sources of such information.

Drawing on these findings, Clare Ettinghausen, Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs at the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), echoed the sentiment of immediate action to ensure that available information is not only accurate but also easily understandable. The HFEA’s own national surveys have shown a rising trend in patients seeking information from social media, reinforcing the necessity for clarity and reliability in the material accessed by those considering or undergoing fertility treatment.

As misinformation sweeps through social media, the urgency of establishing standards akin to those found in clinical consultations becomes increasingly apparent. Both health authorities and social media platforms must work together to foster an environment where accurate information thrives, providing users with the essential guidance needed in their fertility journeys. Until the divide between credible medical advice and viral misinformation is bridged, patients may remain vulnerable to the considerable risks posed by misleading content.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14754679/social-media-fertility-misleading-untrustworthy.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.mavenclinic.com/post/ttc-on-tiktok)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14754679/social-media-fertility-misleading-untrustworthy.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39511120/), [[3]](https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2025/02/27/--influencers-promoting--overwhelmingly--misleading-information-.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.mdpi.com/2563-6499/4/2/131), [[5]](https://www.jmir.org/2023/1/e49220/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14754679/social-media-fertility-misleading-untrustworthy.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39511120/), [[3]](https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2025/02/27/--influencers-promoting--overwhelmingly--misleading-information-.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2025/02/27/--influencers-promoting--overwhelmingly--misleading-information-.html), [[4]](https://www.mavenclinic.com/post/ttc-on-tiktok)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14754679/social-media-fertility-misleading-untrustworthy.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.mavenclinic.com/post/ttc-on-tiktok), [[6]](https://www.mdpi.com/2563-6499/4/2/131)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14754679/social-media-fertility-misleading-untrustworthy.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39511120/> - A narrative review published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine examines the prevalence of misleading information about women's reproductive health on social media platforms. The study identifies 112 unique misleading claims across various topics, including contraception, abortion, fertility, and maternal health. The authors highlight the significant impact of such misinformation on health outcomes and the importance of promoting evidence-based medical decision-making to counteract these false narratives.
3. <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2025/02/27/--influencers-promoting--overwhelmingly--misleading-information-.html> - A study led by the University of Sydney, published in JAMA Network Open, analysed nearly 1,000 social media posts about five controversial medical screening tests promoted by influencers to almost 200 million followers. The research found that most posts lacked scientific evidence, were promotional, had explicit financial interests, and failed to mention potential harms, raising concerns about the spread of misinformation and its impact on public health.
4. <https://www.mavenclinic.com/post/ttc-on-tiktok> - Research by Maven Clinic investigated the prevalence of fertility misinformation on TikTok by analysing the top 100 'trying to conceive' videos. The study found that over half of the videos featured non-evidence-based strategies, with only 27% created by healthcare professionals. The findings underscore the need for increased awareness and the promotion of accurate information to support individuals seeking fertility advice on social media platforms.
5. <https://www.jmir.org/2023/1/e49220/> - A big data infodemiology study published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research analysed 85,872 YouTube comments over 12 years to assess misinformation about polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). The study found that while female users shared personal experiences, male users often disseminated cures and fake news. The authors emphasise the need for fact-checking and promoting trustworthy sources to counteract the spread of misinformation and its potential harm to individuals with PCOS.
6. <https://www.mdpi.com/2563-6499/4/2/131> - A study published in the Urology Journal examined 300 posts on YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram regarding pelvic organ prolapse (POP). The research found a significant difference in the distribution of misinformation across platforms, with harmful posts most frequently present on Pinterest, leading to harmful inaction and economic harm. The study highlights the risks associated with misinformation on social media and the need for accurate information to support individuals affected by POP.
7. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11606-024-09118-6> - A narrative review published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine analysed 47 articles to identify misleading claims about women's reproductive health on social media. The study found 112 unique misleading claims across various topics, including contraception, abortion, fertility, and maternal health. The authors stress the importance of promoting evidence-based medical decision-making to counteract the spread of misinformation and its potential impact on health outcomes.