# Most social media fertility advice found misleading and commercially biased, study reveals



Recent research has unveiled alarming trends in the realm of online fertility advice, predominantly disseminated via social media platforms like Instagram and X. A comprehensive study conducted by researchers at King’s Fertility examined a total of 939 posts, revealing that the overwhelming majority—about 99.8 per cent—failed to meet crucial standards for accuracy, credibility, quality, and readability. This troubling landscape presents significant risks to public health, particularly during such a time-sensitive and emotionally charged phase of life for many individuals and couples.

The findings highlight that nearly half of the posts analysed contained inaccurate information, while less than 10 per cent were deemed credible. A staggering 45 per cent of these posts exhibited commercial conflicts of interest, raising concerns about the underlying motives behind the shared content. Many posts promoted naturopathy, dubious lifestyle changes, and vaccine misinformation, adding layers of complexity to an already fraught area of health care. The study’s lead authors, Dr. Ippokratis Sarris and Dr. Kugajeevan Vigneswaran, stress that misinformation, especially regarding dietary myths and unproven therapies, can detrimentally affect patients' decisions, potentially delaying the care they require.

The implications of presenting misleading information online are grave. As the number of individuals seeking fertility treatments rises—often hinging on tightly defined biological windows—the risks associated with consuming erroneous advice escalate. Experts have noted that the nature of social media promotes rapid, widespread dissemination of flawed information, which can steer hopeful parents towards harmful or ineffective solutions. Dr. Sarris, in his capacity as Director and Consultant in Reproductive Medicine at King's Fertility, calls for a collaborative effort between clinicians and social media platforms to enhance the quality of health-related information available online. This urgency echoes sentiments voiced by Clare Ettinghausen from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, who worries about how the rise in social media usage complicates informed decision-making for patients navigating fertility options.

Such concerns have been corroborated by other recent studies. For instance, a University of Sydney study assessed nearly 1,000 posts on platforms like Instagram and TikTok concerning medical screening tests. This research revealed a similar pattern of misleading content, highlighting that most posts not only lacked scientific backing but also failed to adequately inform viewers of potential harms associated with various tests. Experts argue that, without critical evaluation of the information presented, individuals could be drawn to unnecessary or potentially harmful medical interventions.

Criticism of misleading health advice extends beyond just fertility. Research shows that misinformation about male infertility is prevalent as well, with nearly 90 per cent of online articles misinterpreting results from non-human studies as immediately applicable to human fertility issues. As a result, misinformation proliferates even further, often spread by non-peer-reviewed sources lacking authoritative scientific insights.

In navigating this landscape, Dr. Lowell Ku from the American Society for Reproductive Medicine advises individuals to critically evaluate fertility-related content, checking credibility and seeking peer-reviewed studies. His recommendations include following trusted medical sources and approaching absolute claims with caution, particularly those derived from influencers promoting 'miracle' cures and anecdotal success stories.

As the landscape of health information continues to change, the responsibility for ensuring the dissemination of accurate, accessible guidance lies with both health professionals and the platforms that facilitate information sharing. A proactive approach is crucial; health care institutions are encouraged to collaborate with social media to uphold the same standards of accuracy found in traditional medical consultations. Only then can the growing gap between reliable medical advice and the tidal wave of online misinformation be effectively bridged, safeguarding public health and enhancing informed patient choices during incredibly vulnerable times.

## 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)
* 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), [[6]](https://disa.org/combating-misinformation-about-fertility-on-social-media/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2025/02/27/--influencers-promoting--overwhelmingly--misleading-information-.html), [[3]](https://www.asrm.org/news-and-events/asrm-news/latest-news/Infertility-in-the-Age-of-TikTok-Separating-Fact-from-Fiction/), [[5]](https://www.powershealth.org/about-us/newsroom/health-library/2025/03/03/instagram-tiktok-feature-overwhelmingly-misleading-medical-info)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7502321/), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/27/social-media-influencers-are-fearmongering-to-promote-health-tests-with-limited-evidence-study-finds)

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## 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://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2025/02/27/--influencers-promoting--overwhelmingly--misleading-information-.html> - A University of Sydney-led study published in JAMA Network Open analysed nearly 1,000 Instagram and TikTok posts about five controversial medical screening tests. The research found that most posts lacked scientific evidence, were promotional, had financial conflicts of interest, and failed to mention potential harms. The tests included full-body MRI scans, genetic testing for cancer, blood tests for testosterone levels, the anti-Mullerian hormone (AMH) test, and gut microbiome assessments. Experts warn that such misinformation can lead to overdiagnosis and unnecessary treatments, posing risks to public health.
3. <https://www.asrm.org/news-and-events/asrm-news/latest-news/Infertility-in-the-Age-of-TikTok-Separating-Fact-from-Fiction/> - An article by Dr. Lowell Ku, MD, published by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, discusses the impact of social media on fertility information. It highlights the prevalence of misleading 'miracle' cures and personal success stories on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Dr. Ku advises individuals to critically evaluate fertility-related content by checking the credentials of the source, looking for peer-reviewed science, being cautious of absolute claims, and following trusted medical sources to navigate the complexities of reproductive health information online.
4. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7502321/> - A study published in the National Library of Medicine analysed male infertility content on social media platforms. The research found that nearly 90% of articles reporting on experimental results in non-human models were misleading, with original studies misinterpreted as having immediate implications for human fertility. The study also noted that over 90% of male infertility content online comes from non-peer-reviewed sources, such as news organizations and alternative media, suggesting limited traction of scientific and medical establishments in the consumer culture.
5. <https://www.powershealth.org/about-us/newsroom/health-library/2025/03/03/instagram-tiktok-feature-overwhelmingly-misleading-medical-info> - An article from Powers Health reports on a study analysing nearly 1,000 Instagram and TikTok posts about five controversial medical screening tests. The study found that most posts were overwhelmingly misleading, lacking scientific evidence, being promotional, and failing to mention potential harms. The tests included full-body MRI scans, genetic testing for cancer, blood tests for testosterone levels, the AMH test, and gut microbiome assessments. Experts warn that such misinformation can lead to overdiagnosis and unnecessary treatments, posing risks to public health.
6. <https://disa.org/combating-misinformation-about-fertility-on-social-media/> - An article from the Digital Impact and Social Advocacy (DISA) discusses the challenges posed by social media in disseminating misinformation about fertility. Dr. Lawrence B. Werlin, a fertility specialist, acknowledges the potential of platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook to empower individuals with knowledge but emphasises the need to address the rampant spread of inaccuracies. The article highlights the importance of distinguishing between personal experience and evidence-based medical advice and encourages individuals to consult with fertility specialists for personalised guidance.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/27/social-media-influencers-are-fearmongering-to-promote-health-tests-with-limited-evidence-study-finds> - An article from The Guardian reports on a study led by the University of Sydney, published in JAMA Network Open, which found that social media influencers are promoting health tests with limited evidence. The study analysed five controversial medical screening tests and found that most posts were overwhelmingly misleading, lacking scientific evidence, being promotional, and failing to mention potential harms. Experts warn that such misinformation can lead to overdiagnosis and unnecessary treatments, posing risks to public health.