

Communicating health, saving lives: mixed Public reception of covid-19 vaccines in Sabah

ABSTRACT

This paper sought to highlight the key role that communications can play in saving lives through the uplifting of health literacy among people. Numerous studies have proven that high exposure to health information will lead to higher adherence to public health preventive measures during the pandemic. And studies have also found that those with high health literacy tend to adhere to health information for a healthy lifestyles. As people no longer refer to conventional source of knowledge like books, the social media has to assumed the role of imparting knowledge about healthcare, health risk and symptoms to ordinary citizens. However, health communication faces great risk and challenge in Malaysia when issues of disinformation about the COVID-19 and its vaccine spread faster than the authentic source. A study was conducted on public understanding of COVID-19 and its vaccines in Sabah involving 38 informants from the district of Tawau. And from this study, several conclusion were drawn namely (a) health communication need to be a continued and sustained effort (b) health communications need to be fundamentally about primary healthcare (c) efficient, rapid and multiple health communication strategy is needed.