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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is an unprecedented pandemic experience that affects the whole world. During an outbreak, every individual is expected to react responsibly, in a timely manner, with integrity and added with scientific evidence to support action. However, the extent of individuals' reaction and action is influenced by the information that they received.

Objective This study aims to explore how people interact with information with regards to the COVID-19 outbreak.

METHOD

Study Design	Qualitative
Setting	General public
Sampling	Purposive sampling
Data collection	- 23 In-depth interviews (IDIs) - Age range (29 y/o – 73 y/o) - Sex (Male: 7, Female: 16)
Analysis	Thematic analysis

RESULTS

Three main themes emerged from the information domain which are: **gathering information**, **appraising information**, and **sharing information**. These themes explain the cycle of receiving and sharing information during an outbreak. At first, when a person receives information both from formal and informal sources, he/she starts to appraise the information. This process includes evaluating the quality and quantity of information, which later on results in trusting formal source of information and condemning false information (fake news). After the evaluating process, he/she reacts towards information by circulating them and this becomes a continuation cycle. Nevertheless, there are also people who share the information without evaluating them.

Ambil maklumat daripada sumber yang betul, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM)...kita update, [daripada] MKN ataupun yang satu lagi, CPRC KKM. (31 y/o female)

The first thing to do is to make sure [that I] keep update[ing] [COVID-19] and do whatever needed as advised by the government. (29 y/o male)

Lots of rumours as you can imagine from the media and everything. So, we had to decipher. (58 y/o female)

GATHERING INFORMATION



APPRAISING INFORMATION

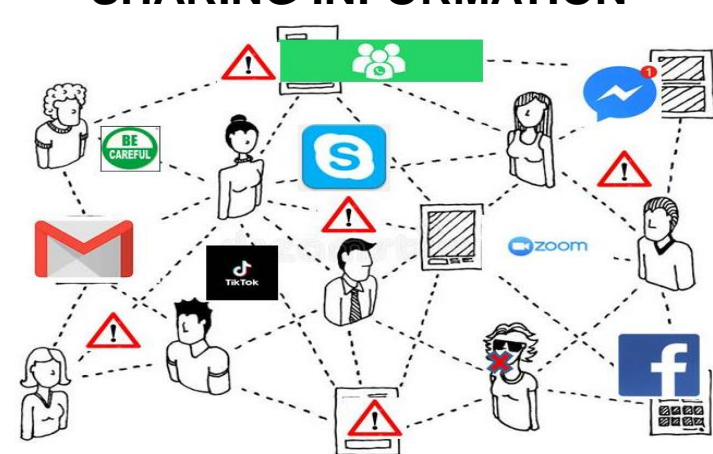


We keep in touch in media especially in TV every hour. We watch the news about what's going on and everything. (35 y/o male)

Everybody started saying that they are going to close the shop and won't be opened for don't know until when. So, you better go now and buy the things and keep the stock. (61 y/o female)

We have information at our fingertips...but we also have lies at our fingertips...So not all that you receive are information, most of them are lies...and you don't allow yourself to be lied...that's your responsibility, you don't spread lies. (64 y/o female)

SHARING INFORMATION



Any other information from the news from our DG and WHO, I just blast into the group. (52 y/o female)

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

When an outbreak occurs, stakeholders must be ready to provide accurate and reliable information to help people make the best possible decisions for their health and well-being. Spreading of information is contributed by many stakeholders, including individuals who have abundant of information at their fingertips. Therefore, our study shows the importance of sharing information that drives social behaviour to support public action during an outbreak. This is also in line with one of the pillars in WHO Guidelines to support Country Preparedness and Response Plan (CPRP) stating that risk communication and community engagement on a regular basis is critical in managing COVID-19.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE



Stakeholders: Risk communication is important for two-way exchange of information between the public and stakeholder, as it shapes public's understanding and advises them on the proper actions to be taken during an outbreak.



Public: As an individual, we have to play our responsibility in evaluating and validating the information before sharing them widely.

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