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MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION: CHARACTERIZATION AND PERFORMANCE ON INSTAGRAM: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The popularization of social media has changed the way people seek and consume information. Instagram has emerged as an essential platform for shaping healthy eating habits and promoting appropriate practices during pregnancy and childhood. This reflects a transformation in the field of nutrition education, where digital presence has become indispensable for many health professionals. Methodology: A literature review was conducted in December 2024, using the ERIC, CAPES Portal, and SciELO databases. The search terms included: Nutrition; Maternal; Instagram. Seven relevant articles that met the inclusion criteria were selected. Results and Discussion: Social media plays an increasingly important role in disseminating information about health and well-being. Instagram has proven to be a prominent platform for the work of nutritionists. This digital environment allows professionals to connect directly with the public, creating content that often manages to engage a diverse audience. Conclusion: As digital communication continues to expand, nutritionists need to stay attuned to the tools and strategies that can enhance their presence on Instagram. The use of videos, infographics, and other visual resources can help simplify complex concepts, while personalized content tailored to the audience's context and needs strengthens the trust-based relationship between professionals and their followers.

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INTRODUCTION

While maternal and child nutrition plays an essential role in promoting the health and well-being of pregnant women and children, its dissemination and guidance via social media have attracted the attention of professionals in the field. Instagram, with its ability to reach large audiences and create attractive visual communication, has proven to be a strategic tool for nutritionists seeking to inform, educate and interact with their target audience (Couto *et al*., 2022). As the popularization of social media has changed the way people search for and consume information, Instagram has emerged as an essential platform for developing healthy eating habits and promoting appropriate practices during pregnancy and childhood. This reflects a transformation in the field of nutritional education, in which a digital presence has become indispensable for many health professionals (Lucchese *et al*., 2023). Although nutritionists are increasingly using Instagram, few studies have investigated how these professionals approach and share content related to maternal and child nutrition on this social network. The way these nutritionists present themselves, the type of content they publish, and how they interact with their followers are aspects that deserve greater attention, especially when we observe the growing use of these platforms by users of different age groups (Nóbrega *et al*., 2019). While Instagram's digital reach is undeniable, the quality of the information shared also needs to be considered. Many nutritionist profiles are dedicated to sharing tips, recipes, and guidelines, but the way these messages are transmitted and the credibility of the content can vary. This makes it essential to analyze how nutritional information is being shared and how it can impact the eating behavior of pregnant women and mothers (Almeida *et al*., 2022). Since nutritionists' work on social media requires constant adaptation to new trends and the needs of the public, it is interesting to observe the strategies used to engage and educate followers. The combination of images, videos, texts and real-time interactions are some of the tools that professionals have at their disposal to promote nutritional education in an accessible and direct way (Cavalcanti; Silva, 2024). While digital media can democratize access to information and guidance on health and nutrition, the effect of such information needs to be investigated to better understand its real application and how it is absorbed by people. Studying the practices of nutritionists on Instagram opens a path to understanding how this platform has been used to positively influence the eating habits of pregnant women and mothers (Martins *et al*., 2022).

Given that adequate nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood is crucial for the development and well-being of children, it is urgent to explore how social media can support this process. Analyzing how maternal and child nutritionists use Instagram to educate and influence the food choices of these populations is essential to understanding the impact of this communication on daily eating practices (Galvão; Silva; Silva, 2020). The study aimed to analyze the profile and professional performance of nutritionists in the maternal and child area on Instagram, investigating the communication strategies used, the types of content covered and the impact of this digital presence on the promotion of food and nutritional health during pregnancy and early childhood.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The search terms used in this systematic review were obtained through keywords. A literature survey was carried out in September 2024, and the ERIC, CAPES Portal and SciELO databases were used in the bibliographic research. The following keywords were used in the search for the papers: Instagram. Nutrition. Maternal. Thus, 7 articles were selected and included according to the eligibility criteria as shown in Figure 1. The inclusion criteria were: scientific articles in English, Spanish and Portuguese, in the last five years, on the topic of maternal and child nutrition in the integration. Book chapters, event summaries, case reports, editorials, systematic reviews, meta-analyses and opinion articles were also excluded.
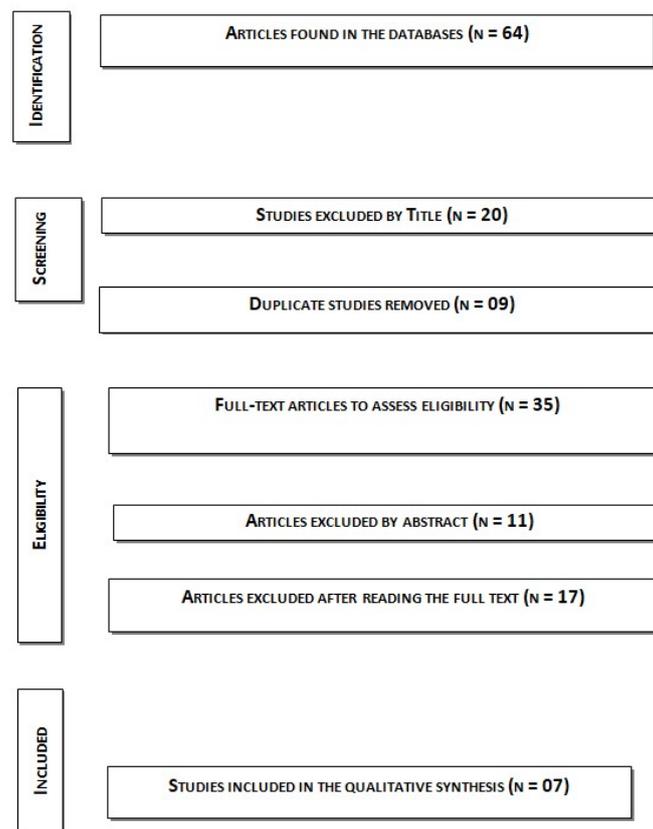

Figure 1. Flowchart and criteria for Selection and inclusion of Works

RESULTS

Table 1. Demonstration of articles that make up the Integrative Review

N#	YEAR	Title	Authors	Periodical	Objectives	Results
1	2019	Social and digital marketing of the Ministry of Health on Instagram: case study on breastfeeding	Chick	Reciis – Rev Eletron Comun Inf Inov Saúde.	Maps the Ministry of Health's strategies for action on the social network Instagram. A case study was carried out between August 2017 and August 2018.	The exposure of the breastfeeding theme on the Ministry of Health's Instagram is a social and digital marketing action that strengthens the National Policy for the Promotion, Protection and Support of Breastfeeding in the country. Its specific objectives are to produce and disseminate knowledge about breastfeeding and protect it from unethical marketing.
2	2019	Social support networks for breastfeeding: an action research	Nobrega et al.	Health Debate	This article aimed to analyze social networks that support breastfeeding and develop actions to strengthen them.	The educational actions carried out consisted of three types of activities, which complemented each other: home visits, discussion groups and interaction in a virtual group. The conclusions affirm the importance of

						the support network for the practice of Breastfeeding, involving relationships of positive reciprocity, generating feelings of recognition, solidarity and satisfaction.
3	2020	Use of new technologies and promotion of breastfeeding	Silva;	Rev Paul Pediatr	Identify the most used social networks and the content most consumed by women seeking support and information about breastfeeding.	The data analyzed shows that women seek clarification of their doubts on Facebook, apps, websites, online videos, podcasts and email instead of the traditional health service environment.
4	2022	Breastfeeding, perspectives and use of social media as a promotion strategy	Couto et al	Brazilian Journal of Development	Promote breastfeeding through social media, offering quality information about the benefits, difficulties and correct management during breastfeeding.	The e-book was hosted on the registration website www.projetoamamentar.com.br and access data was collected by the Bit.ly tool and Instagram, over a period of one month. During the e-book's promotion, 259 downloads were made, the profile created on Instagram had 503 followers (78.3% women), and the publications had a total of 360 likes (79.17% women).
5	2022	Food, media and health Edited motherhood: food introduction in Instagram diaries	Martins; Barbosa; Dias	Commensalities in narrative: media studies and subjectivity	Analyze posts in the form of a food diary on Instagram and identify the subjectivities in editing mothers' profiles during the introduction of food to their children that generate discussion about the social construction of the mother's role.	The construction of an Instagram profile demonstrated an editable aspect of social construction in everyday reality. The subjective experience of each mother is mixed in the image that is projected in the profile shared in the group. The editing reflects identification codes of social distinction highlighted by hashtags for incorporation into the role of mother.
6	2024	Agencies of breastfeeding women: reflecting on breastfeeding, motherhood and the internet in Brazil.	Fazzioni; Lerner	Anna Nery School	The objective is to immerse ourselves in the experiences and discourses of women who breastfeed, seeking to understand what they reveal about models of breastfeeding and motherhood in Brazil today.	. The material was supplemented by interviews with users of the platform and in dialogue with other works on motherhood, feminism and the internet. The aim was to reflect, on the one hand, on a current communication model on breastfeeding and motherhood and, on the other, on the ambivalences surrounding mothers' experiences with caring for their children.
7	2024	Multimodal discourse analysis in Instagram posts for World Breastfeeding Week	Cavalcanti; Silva	Language in (Dis)course	This article analyzes three posts about breastfeeding on the social network Instagram.	The discourses materialized in the Instagram posts of health professionals show the ideological conflict that is established. On the one hand, the discourse against breastfeeding manifests attitudes of affection and judgment, dismissing or questioning scientific knowledge to emphasize the experiences and emotions of mothers who did not breastfeed.

DISCUSSION

Social media plays an increasing role in disseminating information about health and well-being, and Instagram has proven to be a prominent platform for nutritionists. This digital environment allows professionals to connect directly with the public, creating content that often engages a diverse audience. The ability to reach different age groups and education levels makes Instagram an accessible tool for promoting maternal and child health (Cavalcanti; Silva, 2024). Since nutritional practices vary according to the culture, region, and socioeconomic situation of populations, content adaptation for digital platforms needs to be done with sensitivity to these particularities. Analyzing the profile and posts of maternal and child nutritionists on Instagram allows us to observe how guidelines are shaped according to the target audience, considering their needs and social characteristics (Couto et al., 2022). Although Instagram offers an effective means for nutritionists to share knowledge, the effectiveness of this communication depends on its ability to convey clear, accurate, and evidence-based information. Interactivity with followers, through comments, questions, and answers, can contribute to the formation of a support network, but at the same time, it requires that the professional knows how to deal with the diversity of questions and doubts that arise in public spaces such as these (Galvão; Silva; Silva, 2020). While easy access to digital content can be seen as an advantage, there is an important issue to consider: the quality of the information. In a space where anyone can create and share content, scientific and professional validation becomes a challenge. The analysis of content published by maternal and child nutritionists on Instagram highlights the need for a commitment to responsible dissemination, which avoids practices that may generate misinformation, such as the promotion of diets without scientific evidence (Martins et al., 2022).

Since followers' trust is one of the pillars for the success of any professional profile, it is important that maternal and child nutritionists on Instagram cultivate an ethical and transparent stance. The use of reliable sources, the indication of scientific references and the correction of erroneous information are practices that reinforce the professional's credibility and authority on social media (Pinto, 2019). Given that the digital work of nutritionists is part of a global scenario in which health information circulates rapidly, it is essential to reflect on the effects of this

communication on the eating habits of mothers and pregnant women. The ability to generate changes in eating habits through Instagram depends on the quality of the information and the way it is received and applied in the daily lives of these people (Galvão; Silva; Silva, 2020). Although the digital presence of nutritionists has expanded, it is important to highlight that not all content shared on Instagram has the depth and clarity needed to promote sustainable changes in eating behaviors. The simplicity of posts, with quick tips and recipes, can attract the public, but the risk lies in transmitting superficial information, which is not always appropriate or applicable in all situations. Thus, creating content that aligns practicality and scientific support is one of the biggest challenges for professionals in the field (Fazzioni; Lerner, 2024). While interactions on Instagram can be seen as a way to democratize access to nutritional guidance, it is important for nutritionists to seek a personalized approach, adapting their messages according to the needs and realities of their followers. Segmenting content, addressing different issues at specific times, allows professionals to speak directly to different groups, such as pregnant women, mothers of young children, and caregivers, offering tips that truly meet their nutritional needs (Nóbrega et al., 2019). Since Instagram is characterized by its visual nature, the use of images and videos becomes a powerful tool for transmitting dietary guidelines. However, a balance between visual appeal and the delivery of technical and reliable content is necessary. The risk of prioritizing aesthetics over the quality of informative content is a point that needs to be considered by those seeking to use the platform to disseminate relevant and scientific knowledge in the area of maternal and child nutrition (Cavalcanti; Silva, 2024).

CONCLUSION

As digital communication continues to expand, nutritionists need to be aware of the tools and strategies that can improve their performance on Instagram. The use of videos, infographics and other visual resources can facilitate the understanding of more complex concepts, while personalizing content, geared towards the context and needs of the audience, strengthens the relationship of trust between the professional and their followers. However, the credibility of this information depends on consistency with practices based on scientific evidence. However, maternal and child nutrition has a direct impact on public health, and it is essential that nutritionists continue to explore the potential of Instagram in an ethical and informative way. This study reinforces the importance of nutritional education as a means of preventing future health problems, but it also highlights the challenge of balancing accessibility and quality in digital communication. The future of nutrition on social media will depend on the ability of professionals to adapt their practices to the demands and realities of the public, without losing their commitment to science.

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