

ANTIDEPRESSANTS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS' TWEETS



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BACKGROUND Antidepressants are the primary treatment for depression, and social support from social media may offer another support route. While Twitter has become an interactive platform for healthcare providers and their patients, previous studies found low engagement of healthcare providers when discussing antidepressants on Twitter.

OBJECTIVE This study aims to analyse the Twitter posts of healthcare providers related to antidepressants after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to explore the healthcare providers' engagement and their areas of interest.

METHOD Tweets within a 10-day period were collected through multiple searches with a list of keywords within Twitter and filtered with several certain inclusion criteria, including a manual screening to identify healthcare providers. A content analysis was conducted on those eligible tweets where correlative themes and subthemes were identified.

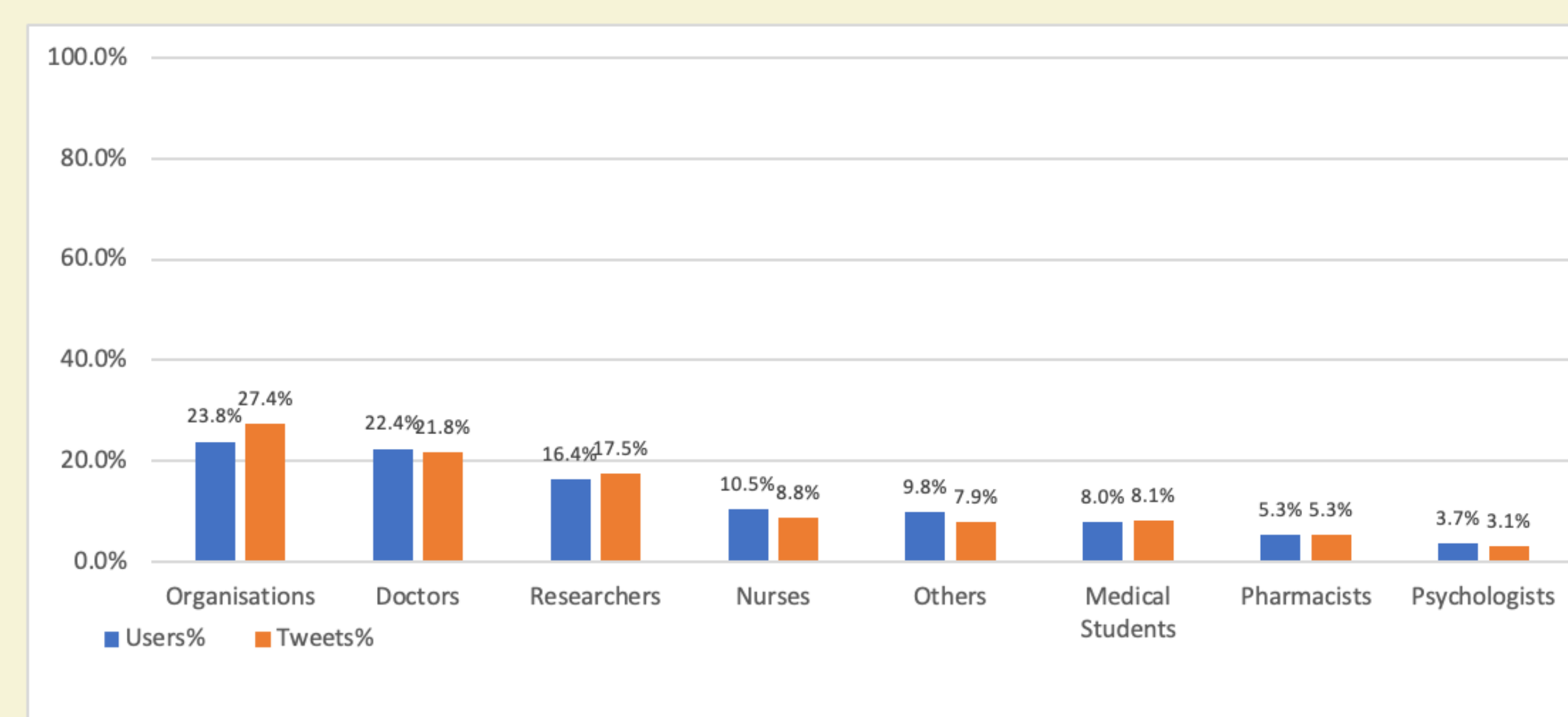
KEY FINDINGS

Engagements: Healthcare providers contributed 5.9% of the antidepressant-related tweets (n=770/13,005).

Popular clinical topics: The major clinical topics referred to in the tweets were side effects, antidepressants for the treatment of COVID-19 and antidepressant studies of psychedelics.

Personal experiences sharing: Nurses posted more tweets sharing personal experiences with mostly negative attitudes, in contrast to the doctors.

Citations: Academic citations were commonly used among healthcare providers, especially users representing healthcare organisations.



Contributions of Users and Tweets by Categories: Organisational users were the most active group, whereas pharmacists engaged less.

CONCLUSIONS

A relatively low proportion of healthcare providers' engagement on Twitter about antidepressants was found, with a minimal increase throughout the COVID-19 pandemic when compared to previous research.

While comparing content from subgroups of healthcare providers, it was found that pharmacists lacked engagement in social media.

Twitter was being used as a platform for professional networking and education.

Nurses talked more about their self-experiences on antidepressants and their side effects while physicians may have refrained from doing so to maintain their professionalism.

Organisational users acted more academically than individual healthcare providers.