

Social Media Traps

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September 13, 2021 By [Bob Barnett](#)

Looking for cancer treatment info on Facebook, Twitter, Reddit or other social media sites? Nearly one in three of the articles you'll find contain misinformation that's often harmful, finds a study by the University of Utah's Huntsman Cancer Institute published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

Researchers asked experts from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, which develops evidence-based professional guidelines for cancer care, to evaluate 200 popular cancer-related articles on social media sites.

Misinformation, such as the misuse of evidence or the use of misleading titles, characterized 32.5% of the articles. More concerning: 30.5% contained possibly harmful information, such as encouraging people with cancer to delay potentially curative care, use unproven (and often expensive) therapies and self-medicate with toxic compounds. The harmful articles were more likely to be shared than more accurate ones.

Looking for reliable info? The American Cancer Society ([cancer.org](#)), itself a good source, recommends the American Society of Clinical Oncology ([cancer.net](#)), CancerWise ([mdanderson.org/cancerwise](#)), Medline Plus ([nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/cancers.html](#)), National Cancer Institute ([cancer.gov](#)), National Comprehensive Cancer Network ([nccn.org](#)) and Oncolink ([oncolink.org](#)).
