



Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences  
College of Human Medicine  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# Bioethics

## Public Seminar Series

2020-2021

### Is Seeking Information on Social Media Harmful to Your Health?

Studies of health literacy in the United States estimated that only 12% of adults had proficient health literacy skills. This talk will examine how social media platforms such as YouTube widen such health literacy disparities by steering users toward questionable content. Extracting thousands of videos purporting to be about diabetes, I verified whether the information shown conforms to valid medical guidelines. Using methods from computer science called deep learning, I identify medical terms in these videos and then classify videos based on whether they encode a high or low degree of medical information. Using data from aggregate engagement with these videos, I discover that videos that are popular are less likely to contain validated medical information. A study on the most popular videos on COVID-19 likewise found that a quarter of videos did not contain medically valid information.



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Zoom Webinar Registration: [bit.ly/bioethics-susarla](https://bit.ly/bioethics-susarla)

Nov  
18

12 - 1 pm ET  
Lecture and Q&A



All seminars are recorded and posted online in our webinar archive.

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