



European Association for Cancer Education

32nd Annual Scientific Meeting

Spreading ideas: What is the inspiration and engagement when TED Talks are on cancer?

MARINA VERJOVSKY, CLAUDIA JURBERG *

Since 1984, TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) talks proposes to spread ideas through short and well-structured conferences. Nowadays, TED videos cover a wide range of topics in more than 100 languages and reach billions of views. Despite being a broad source of health communication, there are no studies on how this tool addresses the cancer matter.

Objectives. In this research, we aimed to enlight some aspects regarding two major issues: 1) Are TED Talks a good source for cancer communication? 2) How does the public respond to cancer-related TED Talk lectures?

Methodology. We searched for the keyword “cancer” at TED.com website on January 2018. All lectures transcripts were obtained, along with related informations, such as views numbers, likes and dislikes rates, release data, etc. We also analyzed a sample of 938 comments, which correspond to the 10 most relevant (if existing) from each video at TED.com and YouTube platforms.

Results. From the 49 videos related to cancer, 11 had as main subject lecturers with personal experiences whereas 33 were scientific-related. Only three lectures approached prevention themes, considered as of major relevance for cancer communication to broad audiences. Instead, they brought more therapies (16) and diagnosis (12) issues, and often promoted exaggerated extrapolations of their research results (20). Scientific lectures also made frequent use of a “bad vs. good” duality discourse by criticizing current science and policies and then offering hope. Regarding the public response, non-scientific lectures had more negative votes than the scientific ones. Moreover, the audience had two major motivations to provide a comment: to judge the lectures and to share personal stories.

Conclusions. We spotted positive and negative aspects of cancer-related TED Talks, which are of great relevance to help enhance this tool as a relevant health communication source.

* ONCOBIOLOGY PROGRAM/INSTITUTO DE BIOQUÍMICA MÉDICA LEOPOLDO DE MEIS. CENTRO DE CIÊNCIAS DA SAUDE. UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO DE JANEIRO. AV. CARLOS CHAGAS FILHO, 373 – BLOCO H SALA H2003. CIDADE UNIVERSITÁRIA. CEP 21.941-902. RIO DE JANEIRO. BRAZIL
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CJURBERG@BIOQMED.UFRJ.BR