

# The unintentional spread of misinformation on 'TikTok'; A paediatric urological perspective

Niall J. O'Sullivan et al. J Ped Urol 2022; 18: 371–75

## Background:

- 'TikTok' is a social media app with over 1.1 billion users from all age groups and backgrounds
- It publishes short videos which are predominantly entertainment based
- The platform is increasingly used to spread information of varying accuracy about medical conditions and treatments
- It has been found that up to 96% of parents use social media for health education

## Aims of this study:

- This study aims to assess the authenticity of information disseminated on 'TikTok' on common paediatric urological conditions in comparison to current EAU guidelines

## Type of study and methods:

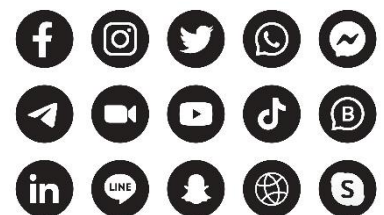
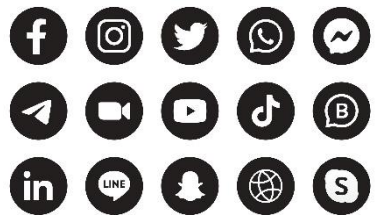
- A search on 'TikTok' was performed to identify videos with highest engagement for a range of paediatric urology conditions
- Videos were categorised as statements on conditions or treatments, factual or non-factual, delivered with educational intent
- Conditions included: nocturnal enuresis, vesicoureteral reflux, hypospadias and testicular torsion
- Content was compared with EAU\* guidelines

## Findings:

- 27 videos met criteria for inclusion, with a combined total of 6,578,863 views, 308,700 likes and 5782 comments
- Among the 24 publishers, there were 8 lay-people (33.3%), 7 doctors (29.2%), 5 family members (20.8%), 3 patients (12.5%), 2 therapists (8.3%) and 2 non-doctor healthcare professionals (8.3%)
- 22.2% of videos contained information that is also found in EAU guidelines
- 66.7% of videos contained misinformation alone
- No videos included any cited evidence

## Conclusions and clinical implications:

- The emergence of 'TikTok' and other social media platforms has allowed the layperson to create content that can potentially reach millions of users worldwide
- Patients, family members or caregivers without a medical background may have difficulty distinguishing what is credible information on social media
- This study demonstrated that 'TikTok' is used as a resource for health information, but it harbours much misinformation with the potential to cause harm to the user



\*EAU, European Association of Urology