



iCAN RESEARCH INTERNSHIP: Social Media

Background:

Digital and social media represent an important source for gathering and sharing information; specifically for health-related information. Early research indicates that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the vast majority of social media users accessed science and technology content through social media. This is even more true when it comes to young people and teenagers, whose social media usage rates and the role exerted by social media platforms in their everyday life are much wider than those of the general population.

Internship Focus Need:

Limited literature is available about the perception of vaccines targeting teens. Studies focused on studying HPV vaccine highlight the importance of studying teens and young people's science perception and their vaccine confidence. Few studies investigate the role of social media as a source of information and audience engagement about health issues and vaccines, and express practical consideration for vaccine communication using social media. Others investigate the effects of public health communication campaigns promoting vaccines among young people to increase vaccination rates.

Internship Roles and Responsibilities:

- Evaluate how teenagers use social media in relation with health related information.
- Perform semi-structured interviews using a well recognized method used particularly in social sciences, to gain preliminary insights about people's motivations, assumptions and choices.
- Better understand the thought logic connected to vaccine communication using social media.
- Learn to question how digital media influence the circulation of health related information (including unverified news found online).
- Increase teens' critical thinking skills and digital literacy.
- Contribute to collective benefits in the local contexts and communities in which they live.

Clinical Research Aim:

- Do teenagers use social media as a source of information on their own health?
- How do teenagers with an underlying health condition use social media?
- Do they use social media as a source of information on vaccines?
- What kind of value do they attribute to unverified health information and conspiracy news found online?
- Are they capable of spotting misinformation and disinformation?

Internship Outcome:

- The project will be based on a collaboration between the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital Multifactorial and Complex Diseases Research Area, the Department of Human Sciences of the Link Campus University of Rome, and the International Children's Advisory Network (iCAN).
 - 1) Educate interns to use the method of the semi-structured interview for health research purposes
 - 2) Gain insights on the use of social media from other iCAN Youth Members as a source of information on health among kids.



- 3) This acquired knowledge will be used to better design national and international communication campaigns promoting vaccines among young people.

Tentative Internship Timeline:

May-June:

An online workshop will be organized with the selected interns to train them on how to conduct a semi-structured interview, together with a Professor of Internet studies from the Link Campus University of Rome and with researchers from the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital.

Based on the training, we will ask the interns to conduct 3-5 interviews with iCAN Youth Members, possibly from different countries, with the aim of investigating:

- Use of social media in general.
- Use of the web and social media with regards to their medical condition (information search, involvement in patient groups, health literacy, sharing their condition on their social media profiles).
- Use of gathering and interpreting health-related information from the web and social media.
- After conducting the interviews, they will transcribe the interviews on a shared document.

July:

Wrap-Up, Discuss the interviews and guide interns in writing a scientific article to be submitted in an international journal.

Internship Location:

This position is fully virtual.

Internship Candidate Requirements:

Must be 18+ years of age to apply. Must have the ability to access the internet and use of a computer. Successful candidates will enjoy working with both a team, and independently while setting/meeting goals with the research team to achieve project completion. Use of English language is needed for supporting discussion and collaboration with global partners and youth members.



Internship Benefits:

This position will provide a hands-on, participatory understanding of the global Clinical Research process, while offering further learnings in understanding global patient/provider needs, along with offering letter(s) of reference at internship completion. This internship is not paid.

Application Process:

To apply, please email Amy Ohmer at amyohmer@icanresearch.org with:

- Resume.
- Cover Letter.
- 1 Letter of recommendation.
- Applications due no later than May 30th, 2022.