Autism Knowledge, Awareness, Misinformation and Stigma: A Mixed-Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

Recent research has indicated a notable increase in the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders. Alongside this trend, concerns have grown regarding the shifting perceptions, behaviors, and understanding of autism, primarily due to the proliferation of misinformation on social media. This study aims to examine the dissemination of autism-related information over time, addressing a significant research gap regarding autism knowledge, awareness, misinformation, and stigmatization. The knowledge, attitudes, and behavior (KAB) model is employed to establish a deeper understanding of the interrelationships among various autism variables such as knowledge, awareness, and stigmatization. Additionally, this research explores the relationship between cultural beliefs, social norms, and misinformation on autism knowledge, awareness, and stigmatization. Employing a mixed-methods approach involving a systematic literature review and a web-based survey, the study utilizes the systematic review to gain insights into the diffusion of autism knowledge, awareness, stigma, and misinformation. The survey serves to validate the findings from the systematic review and to examine the correlations between these autism variables. By adopting an evidence-based approach, this research endeavors to shed light on various aspects of autism via dissemination of autism-related information. Findings from this study might potentially aid to identify the sources of autism misinformation and offer strategies to mitigate autism misinformation, thereby fostering a more positive environment for the autism community.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Information seeking; Information use; Data visualization; Sociology of information.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Information behavior; autism spectrum disorder; misinformation; awareness; stigma.