

# The Antagonistic Effect the Ban on Twitter may have on Disease Prevention and Mental Health of the Average Nigerians

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## ABSTRACT

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## Short Communication

Due to the disciplinary action of the twitter police on the “alleged genocidal tweet” of the Nigeria President, the microblogging app (also known as the bird app) twitter was ban indefinitely from the Nigerian internet space [1]. Though initially intended as a form of show of power and tantrum, the country’s government are now taking things from a socioeconomic cumbersome angle before possible restoration [2]. However, all these are in oblivious consideration of what it may cause or mean to the average indigenous Nigerian nor their health. This paper seeks to briefly communicate the possible effects the ban on twitter may have on disease prevention and the mental health of average and low-income earning Nigerians.

Primarily, modern health promotions and education are most effectively done by young health professionals and trainees via social media platforms [3]. Medical practitioners such as Dr. Ojay Femi (@Ojayfemi), Dr. Peter Atang (@FirstDoctor), Dr. Fidelis Egemba (@AprokoDoctor), Dr. Chioma Nwakanma Akanno (@DrZobo), Dr. Nma Halliday and Dr. Henry Njeakor (@Oshuguay) often give medical advises to non-medically inclined Nigerians. Twitter handles of organizations like DKT health International and Backup, alongside advocates like Dr. Chioma Nwakanma Akanno (@DrZobo) always share up to date information on reproductive health. In their

stead, they help prevent Sexually transmitted Infections, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. As regards surgical health advocacies, we have the ever-active International Students Surgical Network (InciSioN) Nigeria and the Surgical Interest Group Lagos (SURGIL).

Furthermore, due to the poor healthcare financing system and insurance in the country, help seeking Nigerians often come to twitter to appeal their medical plights and get funds for their health. Some even get further medical advises. While others come to get funds for other essentials like their education and businesses. To lose this platform will throw these individuals into a medical, financial and psychological dilemma. Health advocacy aside, twitter has become a hub of opportunities for Nigerians, with popular advertisements of jobs, academic scholarships and competition opportunities often reaching the Nigerians via it. It has also become a hub for startup businesses to meet her potential customers and advertise their services, easily reaching their intending audiences. One of the most famous of such businesses is the female preclinical medical student Miss. Goodness Adeosun of the University of Ibadan who did not just get additional funding help, but also nationally widespread customers and fame in her shoe making business “Guddie “shoe Collections. Her, like many others depend

on alacrity of twitter to have a flourishing business. When this flow of business is disturbed, it tends to cause financial setbacks leading to anxiety and low mood, then possible depression.

Well, speaking of depression. The fact that Nigerians now realize that they live in a country where a dictatorial government exploits the rules to their benefits with little or no regards for the actual rule of law will cause a feeling of oppression and fear. As has occurred with the banning of twitter. When one takes into consideration that the country spends more than 2 billion Naira daily to keep twitter ban at bay while having more than 80% of her populace in poverty in also a course for sadness. All this will directly or indirectly impact on the mental health of Nigerians. Although Nigeria is a country where same sex couples and relationships has been criminalized, twitter has become a hub where these individuals can exist and communicate with others within the LGBTQ+ community. This communication helps them get expert advises from fellow queers and limits the mental health problems and fears they are often faced with living in silence and isolation of their identity in the (often violent) Nigeria community that do not tolerate queer individuals. They matter, and so does their mental health too. The ban on twitter puts this at stake.

Furthermore, the rapid nature via which intra-national happenings spread on twitter has left it as one of the only reliable sources of current news. We are able to not just monitor the events happening life, but we also have the opportunity to get on ground intel on the magnitude and direction of the pandemonium. Something the television media are only selectively allowed to do, amongst other restrictions [4]. With the ban on twitter, Nigerians are now in the dark, having to idea when to run or hide. Yet, the country is still under the bandits' siege. This may cause many Nigerians to live in constant fear which can develop to paranoia after time.

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Finally, it is no secret that twitter has become the most reliable aid for announcing and finding missing persons. Of most recent was the advertisement, extensive investigation, reports and tracking of the kidnapping and killing of the just graduated University of Uyo student Iniobong Umoren. This has made twitter the hub of investigative journalism. Worth of mention too is the publication of rape, theft, murder and kidnapping culprits who the society should be wary of. The fact that twitter has helped the preventive, sexual and mental health of Nigerians is not up for debate. The ban on twitter may invariably drive some Nigerians into anxiety, constant fear, paranoia and depression. One will only but wonder, if all these were substitutable for the unaffected <1% in government.

### Recommendation

- The twitter ban should be lifted.
- Institutions should be set up to tackle mental health crises in Nigeria.

### Conflict of Interest

The Author declare no conflict of interest.

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We would like to acknowledge the good people of Nigeria who always show us the possibility of a "one nation" in warm actions..... on twitter.

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