

USING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TO SHAPE HOSPITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A SCOPING REVIEW**Listya Tresnanti Mirtha¹, Wachyu Sulistiadi²**^{1,2}Studi Kajian Administrasi Rumah Sakit, Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia^{1,2}Rumah Sakit Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia
Email: tresnanti.listya@ui.ac.id**Abstract**

A critical situation can substantially impact human behavior, resulting in irreversible behavioral changes. Given the interdependence between various economic aspects and public health measures, including lockdowns, national economies have become unstable, signifying a transformation in market dynamics. The authors aimed to gain a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing that crises often lead to alterations in consumer behavior patterns. We searched eight databases - CINAHL, Cochrane Library, Embase, EmCare, JBI EBP, Medline, Scopus, and PsycInfo. Out of 366 titles and abstracts, twenty-four papers were selected. In an observational study, 11 (45.8%) publications were conducted in hospitals, clinics, and communities. Meanwhile, the rest of the studies were carried out in various other healthcare institutions. Consumer behavior and using technology as marketing tools during the COVID-19 pandemic were the most commonly explored topics. The hospital-at-home model illustrates how healthcare institutions can undertake significant strategic initiatives to usher in comprehensive reforms that prioritize consumers and transform care delivery. The persistent drive to employ digital technology for enhancing the quality of healthcare services and reducing costs serves as a constant motivation. This implies that the consistent effort to harness digital technology to enhance healthcare service quality and reduce expenses has been a steady impetus. Further research is required to ascertain the long-term effectiveness and suitable strategies for optimizing advantages while mitigating risks in the COVID-19 pandemic. A more comprehensive approach would include taking patients' perspectives on using digital health technologies and addressing specific challenges, ethical considerations, and drawbacks highlighted in the existing literature.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, consumer behavior, hospital consumer, hospital marketing strategies, scoping review.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in substantial modifications to healthcare services. The effects of COVID-19 go beyond the actual outbreak, and they will change healthcare in several ways that are, as of yet, unidentified. The pandemic has significantly accelerated global behavioral shifts, marking an unusual departure from the typical persistence of everyday routines. Typically, consumers tend to cling to their established routines, resulting in a notably slow adoption of technologies that necessitate changes in

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behavior. However, in the face of COVID-19, people worldwide are changing their habits quickly and significantly. Customer-oriented firms would be advised to develop methods to adapt to current customer behavior and suit their demands in the post-pandemic age, even if the incentive for such behavioral adjustments is pandemic-specific and transient.

The world is experiencing one of its most severe crises since World War II due to the COVID-19 epidemic. This problem touches every aspect of our lives, with the most significant concern being the virus's direct impact on humans. Society and the global economy have experienced a near standstill, leading to economic downturns in nearly every country. Experts anticipate that the global economic slowdown will result in long-lasting consequences. This economic decline is predicted to impact various aspects of life, including employment, income, and opportunities. As a result, the recovery process may not reach its full potential due to the long-term damage caused by the recession. We expect the COVID-19 crisis to instigate significant shifts in our everyday lives, work, and consumer habits, impacting various industries. It is necessary to implement strategies that can reduce potential risks and setbacks. Businesses must implement measures to lessen the damage, fulfill essential customer needs, and preserve employment levels. Marketing strategies can be instrumental in achieving these goals.(Hoekstra & Leeflang, 2020)

The push for customers to reevaluate their life priorities could potentially establish new standards for spending and values. Customers and businesses are forming closer emotional bonds with dependable providers in their quest for consistency and value. Digitalization is crucial in this regard and demonstrates how businesses, employees, and consumers could be able to continue operating in the future. More circumstances than we previously realized are finding services like Zoom and Google Meet helpful.(Hoekstra & Leeflang, 2020)

The middle and lower classes have difficulty sustaining their living and financial standing, causing people to behave like renting, borrowing, and sharing goods. Purchasing more food produced locally has also become increasingly popular due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One e-commerce platform that connects customers with local businesses is Streetify. The expectation is that consumer markets will suffer adverse impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other data sources report increased infotainment, digital goods, do-it-yourself (DIY) projects, furnishings, streaming services, gardening supplies, and consumer electronics. The idea that the house serves as a sanctuary is reflected in everything here.(Hoekstra & Leeflang, 2020)

The COVID-19 outbreak, lockdown procedures, and social distancing guidelines have impacted consumer purchasing patterns and retail behaviors. Consumers are in the process of adapting to novel circumstances and forming new habits. When customers cannot physically visit a business, businesses adapt to deliver their offerings to the customers. Additional limitations and alterations in how customers purchase and access products and services are expected to alter their routines. Technological advancements, evolving demographics, and the innovative methods consumers have embraced to navigate the blending of work, leisure, and education will all shape these emerging habits.

RESEARCH METHOD

Search

The search, which used a multi-method technique, took place between September and November 2021. Other relevant reviews have used a similar search method. For a subsequent review, citations, abstracts, and full references were downloaded into Mendeley software (v.1.19.4), a computer-based referencing program, if available.

Study Selection

The studies found through the electronic database search were immediately inputted into the reference management software (Mendeley) to eliminate duplicates. Reviewers assessed each survey based on its title and abstract according to the qualifying criteria. Studies whose eligibility could not be verified by their title and abstract were searched for full-text publications. All studies that satisfied the inclusion criteria had their full-text publications obtained.

Eligibility Criteria

We included a study conducted between 2017 and 2021 that evaluated all marketing strategies used by the healthcare system to enhance the provision of medical treatment and associated solutions in response to COVID-19 pandemic consumer behavior, whether published or unpublished, observational or interventional studies.

We excluded studies that evaluated processes and outcomes unrelated to the marketing strategies of hospitals or healthcare systems, and the results of studies focused only on the disease symptoms. We also excluded study protocols and conference abstracts, of which the full-text articles were not found.

Information Sources

To identify relevant studies, eight databases [CINAHL, Cochrane Library, Embase, EmCare, JBI EBP, Medline, Scopus, PsycInfo] were searched comprehensively for English and non-English articles from their inception to November 2021. The search items used were hospital marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and reach hospital consumers. Additional studies were identified by searching bibliographies and abstracts on the website (2017–2021). Data were extracted from each of the included studies by four independent reviewers. Extracted information collected from the study articles was tabulated using Microsoft Excel (v.16.31).

Data Items

The studies included in this review were extracted for data regarding publication details, country of study origin, study design, methods, sample characteristics, study measurements, including intervention and comparison groups, as well as outcome measures such as hospital marketing strategies derived from customer behavior during the pandemic COVID-19.

Data Analysis

The results of the article attributes were summarized using frequency and percentages. Each piece was also thematically examined for themes and subthemes. The scope of an article was not confined to a single subject or subtheme. Data and information from the reviewed research were compiled and presented in a narrative synthesis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Study Characteristics

The search performed on eight different databases yielded a total of 366 records. An additional ten records were identified through hand-searching on websites. After removing duplicates from the 376 documents, 285 records were screened based on their title and abstract according to predetermined eligibility criteria. The preliminary screening excluded 244 records, after which 41 records were accessed for their full text to assess their eligibility. Seventeen records were excluded for the text type (book section or editorial piece) and different outcomes (Fig.1).

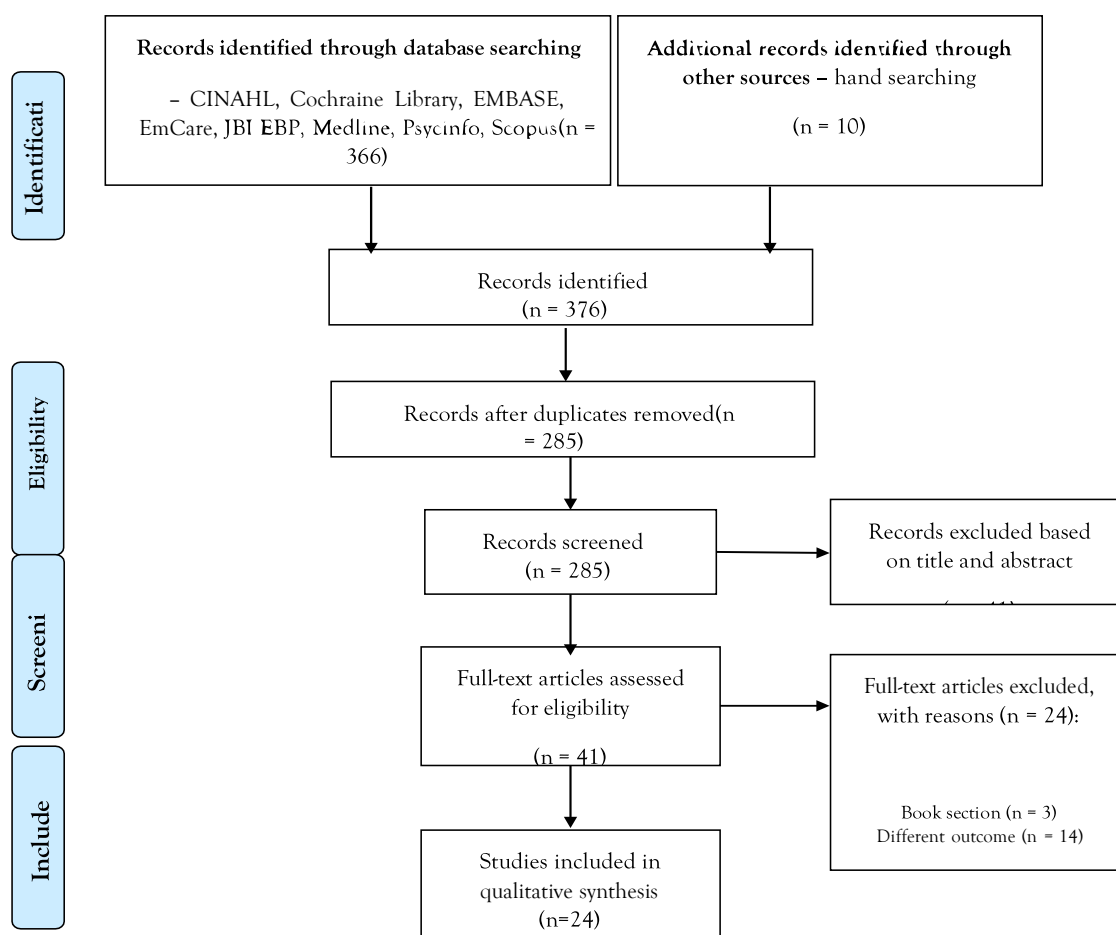


Fig. 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram of Selection of Scoping Reviews

Type and Quality of Studies

Moreover, all the conducted research was observational. This trait is not limited to studies of hospital marketing techniques or customer behavior during the COVID-19 epidemic. Interventional and/or implementation research is noticeably lacking. Even though it has only been suggested that implementation research should be used in the healthcare sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, limited funding remains available for such research endeavors. The twenty- four articles included in this review consisted of

five case-control studies, one cohort study, four qualitative studies, and one case series study. Most are literature reviews; the rest are systematic review studies (Table 1).

Table 1. Study characteristics of included articles

	N (=27)	%
The setting of the Journal Article		
▪ Hospital	4	16.7
▪ Clinic	2	8.3
▪ Community	5	20.8
▪ Others	13	12.5
Study Design		
▪ Interventional/Experimental Studies	0	0
▪ Observational Studies:	0	0
o Cross-Sectional Study	5	20.8
o Case Control	1	4.2
o Cohort Study	4	16.7
o Qualitative Study	1	4.2
o Case Series	11	45.8
▪ Literature Review	2	8.3
▪ Systematic Review		

As many as 21% of the articles that publish this topic are from journals in the health and marketing fields that specifically discuss customer behavior shifts and healthcare facility modifications during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on SJR 2020, The majority of the publications in this review had an impact factor of 1 to 3, with the first author predominantly from the United States (Table 2).

Table 2. Characteristics of included articles (N=27)

	(N=27)	%
Journal Type		
▪ General	3	12.5
▪ Specialized	21	87
Journal Impact Factor (SJR 2020)		
▪ Less than 1	7	29.2
▪ 1 to 3	13	54.2
▪ Greater than 3	1	4.2
Affiliation of First Author		
▪ Asia	8	33.3
▪ Europe	4	16.7
Funding of Journal Article		

▪ Local	7	29.3
▪ Regional	1	4.2
▪ No Funding Received	3	12.5
▪ Not Mentioned	13	54.2

Most Studied Topics

A substantial portion of the published articles primarily focused on subjects related to the application of digital technologies in hospital marketing strategies. These articles discuss the role of digital technology in healthcare marketing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital marketing strategies in the healthcare sector, as traditional marketing strategies have become less effective due to lockdowns and quarantine measures. Digital marketing strategies have become crucial for healthcare providers to reach patients who are unable or unwilling to visit healthcare facilities due to the risk of contracting COVID-19. These strategies have also been instrumental in promoting teleconsultation services, which have become increasingly important during the pandemic. The digital transformation of healthcare services has changed patients' behavior and provided a basis for creating a resilient society. The COVID-19 crisis has led to rapid transformations in service delivery using digital technologies, showing that these technologies have reached the level of maturity required for deployment within healthcare systems. The pandemic has forced healthcare companies to improve their digital marketing strategies to enhance patient experience and engagement. These articles also discuss the application of advanced digital technologies and Industry 4.0 tools in delivering healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Digital-based methods are being used to segment, target, and position hospital services, with the primary aim of maintaining hospital operations without increasing the risk of viral transmission within the hospital environment. This strategy is deemed adequate in accommodating the dynamic changes and adjustments that are taking place.

Least Studied Topics

All the research reported using or assessing some technology, such as mobile phones, smartphone applications, computerized physician order input, electronic medical records, and electronic patient management systems. Notably, none of the published publications took a systematic strategy emphasizing each step of consumer behavior modification concerning health-related issues other than customer satisfaction with the services provided. There has been a lack of research material focusing on specific interventions emphasizing the stages of change. Thus, the approach has predominantly centered on general behavioral changes related to health protocols, lacking a comprehensive examination of the biopsychosocial aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects. Table 3 summarizes the baseline characteristics of the studies that were considered.

Table 3. Baseline Characteristics of The Eligible Studies

Article #	Author (Year)	Country	Participants	Measures Key	Information
1	Chen J, Wang Y (2021) MENDELEY CITATION PLACEHOLDER 3	United States	There were 544 papers published between 2016 and 2020	<p>Intervention: Implementing social media platforms for health goals is progressively attracting researchers' attention.</p> <p>Comparator: This review provided an overview of ten ways social media is employed for healthcare-related purposes. Based on the kind of social media user, these uses were divided into three categories (Chen & Wang, 2021) professionals, and the general public. The following sections describe the many methods in which each type of user uses social media and the benefits and drawbacks of each program.</p>	<p>Patients are not the only ones who use social media platforms for health-related reasons. The general public and healthcare professionals offer advantages to individuals dealing with illness or those seeking health-related information.</p> <p>Government usage of social media platforms might be advantageous for society as a whole, particularly in times of disease outbreaks.</p>
2	Kernebeck, S. <i>et al.</i> (2020) (Kernebeck et al., 2020)	Germany	N/A	N/A	<p>Digital interventions, including Mobile Health Applications (MHAs) and Mobile Applications (MAs), hold promise for advancements in diagnostics and treatment within gastroenterology and the broader management of chronic diseases. Specifically, individuals with chronic conditions and healthcare providers</p>

					stand to gain numerous benefits from these interventions.
3	Li, D. <i>et al.</i> (2020)(D. Li et al., 2020)	China	638 patients with chronic disease	Intervention: The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed our study model's hypotheses. We designed a questionnaire through patient interviews, validated it with a preliminary survey, and employed it to collect data for our study. We utilized the cluster sampling method to select participants with chronic illnesses.	Patient Benefit-Cost (PBC) and Perceived Service Quality (PSD) are the essential elements impacting a patient's propensity to use Internet hospitals' online inquiry services. As a result, Internet hospitals should ensure a varied pool of elite medical professionals and enhance the design of online service delivery. This strategy will considerably help to encourage patients to use Internet inquiry services for healthcare needs. Perceived Convenience (PC), Effort Expectancy (EP), and worries about perceived dangers influence individuals' behavioral intentions.
4	Zimmerman, M. <i>etal.</i> (2021)(Zimmerman et al., 2021)	United States	240 patients from May 2020 to October 2020, as well as a control	Intervention: The telehealth and face-to-face groupings. Comparator: N/A	Patients were pleased with the initial diagnostic evaluation, regardless of whether it was conducted in person or through telehealth for delivering partial hospital-level care. They held positive expectations upon admission, believing the procedure would be helpful. Following therapy, nearly all of the

			group, treated a year earlier		participants in both groups indicated that they would recommend the treatment to someone they know and were satisfied with every aspect of the program.
5	Thompson, M. <i>et al.</i> (2021)(Thompson et al., 2021)	United States	N/A	<p>Intervention: Patient satisfaction with telehealth-assisted partial hospitalization treatments was compared to individuals who got in-person treatment before the COVID-19 epidemic.</p> <p>Comparator: N/A</p>	Patients were pleased with the first diagnostic evaluation for partial hospital-level treatment provided locally and virtually. They were hopeful about the treatment's possible advantages when they were admitted. Following therapy, both groups were pleased with all parts of the program, and virtually all indicated a readiness to suggest it to friends or family members.

Discussion

Synthesis of Results

In any market, consumers fuel market competition, growth, and integration of the economy. The state of the economy is affecting consumer behavior, albeit how much of the shift seen during the crisis will continue is unknown.

National economies have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating changes in market dynamics. It has been observed that lower-income and younger consumers are more inclined to reduce their expenditures. In contrast, older and higher-income consumers exhibit greater resilience and anticipate maintaining or increasing their spending levels. Many consumers have expressed heightened concern about the pandemic, with more respondents (45%) expressing unease about the disruptions it has caused compared to health-related issues (31%). Consequently, there has been a substantial decrease in spending in physical and online retail channels, with many planned purchases being postponed and a general trend towards adopting a more frugal lifestyle.

Consumers have shown a growing interest in saving, particularly investments, insurance, and health and hygiene products. Their sensory experiences and cognitive patterns influence this shift in consumer behavior. (Mehta et al., 2020) The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Behavior, has been used to explain and predict a variety of human actions. TPB comprises five major components: behavioral intention, actual behavior, perceived behavioral regulation, subjective standards, and attitude toward the conduct. TPB holds that an individual's decision to engage in something particular is determined by their desire to do so. (D. Li et al., 2020) According to existing literature and extensive discussions, the behavior exhibited by Indian consumers during the lockdown might signify a permanent shift, setting a new standard for consumption practices. These consumers may face financial challenges due to increased concerns about healthcare, personal health, and overall well-being. This could be a new catalyst for long-term behavior change, leading to a new segment of cost-conscious customers prioritizing saving and altering their purchasing habits. (Mehta et al., 2020)

The ongoing COVID-19 health crisis is reshaping the healthcare landscape, increasing healthcare system demands nationwide. These systems need to adapt their service delivery methods to improve accessibility to care and enhance efficiency and quality, all while dealing with limited resources. As a result, there is a rising public interest in and receptivity to extending telehealth models to meet these changing healthcare demands. (Thompson et al., 2021)

The same logic is used by researchers looking at the short- and long-term effects of COVID-19 on customer behavior and how companies should modify their marketing plans and policies in response. (Hoekstra & Leeflang, 2020) The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in notable changes in the attitudes of consumers. Significant consumer purchasing behavior has shifted from local brick-and-mortar retailers to online markets. (Tyagi & Pabalkar, 2021) This offers a notable chance for marketers to create awareness across a broad audience and promote a transition to a healthier, more organic lifestyle through the support of their products or services. (Mehta et al., 2020)

Social media platforms are used by the general public and healthcare professionals for health-related purposes, mainly to provide benefits to people who are unwell or seeking information connected to health.(Chen & Wang, 2021) To align with evolving trends in seeking health information, healthcare professionals can benefit from effective development, institutional backing, and proactive collaboration.(Neely et al., 2021a) Patients expressed satisfaction with the initial diagnostic assessment for partially hospitalized care provided locally and virtually.(Thompson et al., 2021)

The effective integration of healthcare across diverse dimensions, such as combining healthcare with social media and various communication channels, has demonstrated significant success.(Farsi, 2021) During the COVID-19 pandemic, advancements in technology are enhancing the quality of healthcare services, cutting costs, and boosting clinical efficiency. (Keesara et al., 2020) In healthcare systems globally, there is substantial potential for introducing telemedical innovation, particularly in nations with lower or middle incomes.(P. Li et al., 2020) During the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for telemedicine services became evident. Increased availability of digital services is expected to accelerate.(Zadka & Olajossy, 2021) Telehealth holds the capacity to make significant progress, and the current protocols designed to enhance safety and minimize medical errors remain relevant for interactions in telemedicine.(Y. Evans et al., 2020) Further study is necessary to link telehealth with practical strategies for maintaining perioperative health as these technologies become more widely accepted and developed.(Lambert et al., 2021)

Hospital Managerial Insights

Pandemics pose significant challenges, but they also offer substantial opportunities. Healthcare executives can handle short-term uncertainty while pursuing critical reforms by relying on historical lessons. As a result, COVID-19's eventual effect will be assessed not just by the measurements listed above, not to mention by its part in promoting three critical changes: (1) pushing provider groups to function more like a "system," (2) modifying the care system to satisfy the quadruple aim, and (3) guaranteeing that the focus of care is the client.(Waldeck et al., 2020)

Several conclusions can be derived from the study, which could prove valuable to hospitals as they navigate the impacts of COVID-19 or contemplate strategies to enhance their response in the event of future adverse situations. Adaptability, agility, effective communication, coordination, strong leadership, and the application of technology have all been identified in the literature as crucial factors for success in disaster management and crisis response. These traits were evident in the reactions of the analyzed businesses during the crisis.(Margherita & Heikkilä, 2021)

COVID-19 has left a substantial imprint on customer perceptions, leading to significant shifts in consumer behavior, with a notable move away from local brick-and-mortar establishments to online platforms. While strategies to regain market control are being developed, the outcomes remain uncertain. Consumer purchasing behavior will not return to its pre-pandemic state, necessitating adaptability on the part of businesses. Moreover, this changing landscape makes predicting how each consumer views different companies challenging.(Tyagi & Pabalkar, 2021)

Consumers are currently reevaluating their life priorities, leading to the emergence of new values and criteria for their purchasing decisions. This shift is evident in a heightened focus on family, community, personal health, and digital solutions. This tendency is predicted to continue soon. The significance of healthcare and medical services has become more prominent as people increasingly recognize the value of their health, aligning with the saying that "health is wealth." While healthcare organizations aim to improve health outcomes, the perspectives of patients and consumers can sometimes become obscured within the complexities of healthcare systems and processes.(Zheng, 2021) In light of the current circumstances, hospitals are advised to reassess and redefine their mission, services, communication channels, and target audience, as suggested in the report. This may necessitate adjustments to the hospital's marketing strategies, including product selection, private label offerings, pricing strategies, promotions, and communication methods.(Tyagi & Pabalkar, 2021)

Impact of Consumer Behaviour on Hospital Marketing Strategies

The world and our healthcare system, in particular, have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic. Healthcare, traditionally an analog system, was ill-prepared to handle the swift spread of this disease. In preparation for an increase in COVID-19 cases, healthcare systems nationwide must take immediate action to modernize healthcare delivery and expand their capabilities through digital technology.(Keesara et al., 2020)

▪ *Telemedicine*

Telemedicine has become more prevalent as technology infrastructure has rapidly advanced. It is now bridging the gap between the idealized vision of its use and its practical healthcare applications. This has become especially relevant during the ongoing public health emergency, highlighting the need to enhance the technical infrastructure available to physicians for delivering telehealth services. While these efforts represent crucial initial steps, a more comprehensive plan is required, focusing on three main areas: paying healthcare providers for new digital services, easing regulatory burdens, and evaluating clinical care supplied via these technologies.(Keesara et al., 2020) Telemedicine encompasses clinical services provided through the web, mobile, satellite, and telephone platforms. It involves using telecommunications technology to offer healthcare services and clinical knowledge remotely. Modern health categories include wearable technology, telehealth services, telemedicine, mobile health (mHealth), and personalized medicine.(Y. N. Evans et al., 2020)

Telemedicine transfers the focus of prevention, treatment, care, and support away from traditional clinical settings and toward clients' homes and mobile devices, allowing for continuous care. Recognizing telemedicine's hurdles is critical in addressing health inequities and limiting the impact of COVID-19, intending to influence the evolution of treatment delivery modalities.(Zhai, 2020) Although smartphones are widespread, the use of telemedicine for managing chronic illnesses, including movement disorders, has been overlooked in traditional healthcare settings until more recently.(Lamdan et al., 2020) Patients with diverse chronic diseases or compromised immune systems, for instance, will face the decision of either risking potential COVID-19 exposure during an in-person doctor's visit or postponing essential treatment.(Keesara

et al., 2020) Patients expressed satisfaction with the initial diagnostic assessment and had high hopes for the effectiveness of treatment after admission to an intensive acute care setting. This included both virtual and in-person treatment delivery techniques, daily sessions of individual and group therapy, and psychopharmacological treatment.(Zimmerman et al., 2021)

Although the field of adolescent health has embraced the use of online healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic, this sector must remain committed to ensuring treatment access, especially for patient populations facing shortages in our healthcare systems. This includes tactics like using telemedicine before and after future outbreaks of infectious diseases and climate-related disasters, increasing access to private services like reproductive wellness, birth control, psychological health, addiction treatment, and psychiatric services, working with populations to reach vulnerable youth, and extending access to specialty care (like care for eating disorders and gender issues) in rural or underserved areas.(Y. N. Evans et al., 2020; Fischer et al., 2021; Zadka & Olajossy, 2021) Teleneurology, a telemedicine system equipped to provide language rehabilitation in neurological cases, is a valuable tool for remotely evaluating patients with frontal temporolobar dementia (FTD). User satisfaction is high, and it is a secure and efficient substitute for in-person therapy. Furthermore, the study found that half of the FTD patients, as well as a considerable proportion of their caregivers, had a significant reduction in clinical characteristics and quality of life.(Capozzo et al., 2020) Telemedicine technology facilitates various healthcare services like teleconsultations, telerounds, teleradiology, and teleintensive care units, enabling the screening, triaging, and treating of COVID-19 and other diseases. The government and hospitals have actively promoted the platform on social media while waiving associated costs to encourage adoption. However, it is of utmost importance to prioritize data security and privacy. Factors such as patient data security, ownership, storage, and traceability need to be carefully addressed, especially for newly implemented online systems that were swiftly put in place due to the urgent nature of the COVID-19 situation.(P. Li et al., 2020)

- *Mobile Health Apps and Medical Apps*

As digital therapeutic tools, mobile health apps (MHAs) and medical apps (MAs) have gained popularity. MHAs and MAs are used in almost all healthcare professions for various health-related applications. The utilization of these MHAs and MAs, along with telemedicine solutions, has significantly increased during the ongoing pandemic. These digital treatments, including MHAs and MAs, can potentially broadly enhance diagnostic and treatment procedures in gastroenterology and chronic illness management. This advancement benefits patients with chronic conditions and healthcare professionals in various ways.(Kernebeck et al., 2020)

- *Electronic Consultations*

Telemedicine, known as electronic consultations or eConsults, enables simultaneous, in-person discussions between a primary care physician (PCP) and a specialist. This modality allows for professional input without the patient visiting the specialist. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional telemedicine, which involved synchronous video interactions between a specialist and the patient, was the dominant

approach to bringing specialized care to primary care settings, with the primary goal of saving patients' time and reducing travel. However, Since conventional telemedicine involves consumers scheduling, paying for, and attending in-person specialist appointments, it may not increase the healthcare system's or providers' efficiency. Furthermore, the time spent by each clinician with a patient often remains constant, implying that it neither increases clinic availability nor efficiency, and it may eliminate the primary care physician as an essential collaborator in the specialist treatment process.

eConsults offers an opportunity to improve the efficiency of care delivery by serving as a new entry point for patients, ensuring that the proper people receive the correct treatment and information, all while keeping the primary care provider (PCP) and patient connection intact within a primary care environment. Studies show that almost 40% of specialized consultations do not lead to changes in a patient's treatment plan. This inefficiency adds considerably to the annual increase in healthcare costs, which has considerable economic repercussions for state budgets. eConsults are an important telemedicine tool since they eliminate the need for face-to-face specialist appointments while supporting patient-centered primary care medical homes.(Thompson et al., 2021)

- *Social Networking*

Social media may help with social mobilization campaigns, health studies and practices, and the management of offline healthcare-related services and activities, among other health-related benefits. It might be a beneficial tool for healthcare education, outbreak surveillance, health campaigns, behavior modification, and health treatments. However, further investigation is required in domains including audience segmentation, evaluating the effectiveness of social media in medical interventions, comprehending the function of social media in shaping health identities, and addressing privacy concerns.(Chen & Wang, 2021)

Social networking platforms are crucial for disseminating public health information and recommendations for disease prevention. However, it should be noted that social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter create particular issues for healthcare practitioners and public health officials.(Neely et al., 2021b) If health practitioners seek to mitigate the negative consequences of misinformation and disinformation, they must be proactive and well-prepared in contacting health consumers on social media. Health practitioners can adapt to changing health information-seeking habits with practical training, institutional support, and proactive cooperation.(Huang & Liu, 2020) A combination of medical treatment with social media and other forms of communication, known as multidimensional healthcare, has demonstrated its effectiveness. Striking the right balance between digital and traditional healthcare is crucial.(Farsi, 2021)

- *Internet Memes*

The literature on marketing communication states that the initial phase of customers' awareness of new goods and information delivered through multiple media is the brand image. It is argued that online memes might improve a brand's image by influencing customers by communicating symbolic meanings. The research discovered four critical characteristics of online memes that lead to their spread: humor, Positive emotional effect, brand prestige, and interaction are all important factors. Online

interactive communication tactics, such as internet memes, should be developed to engage customers and successfully implant symbolic meaning in their thoughts. This enhanced infectious effect of internet memes on consumers can lead to their rapid dissemination and ultimately contribute to an improved brand image.(Teng et al., 2021)

- *Internet Hospitals*

Internet hospitals are an innovative technique for delivering healthcare services over the Internet, providing a practical means to optimize healthcare resource allocation while meeting the public's expectations for high-quality medical treatments. Internet hospitals, as opposed to mobile health (mHealth), which involves the integration of computers, medical sensors, and portable devices to satisfy customers' healthcare and health information demands, function as comprehensive online service platforms inspired by conventional hospitals. These platforms encompass consultations, prescription services, payment processing, and drug delivery. A range of health-related services, including online disease discussions, guidance, electronic medications, medical details, remote diagnosis, medical care, rehabilitation, chronic disease management, and health education, are available to patients via a website or mobile app anytime.

In China, internet hospitals are emerging as a feasible choice for addressing healthcare needs. Perceived Behavioral Control and Perceived Service Delivery significantly impact patients' inclination to use Internet hospitals' online inquiry services, making them critical elements. As a result, internet hospitals should improve their online service delivery infrastructure and make high-quality specialists available, as this will positively affect patients' willingness to utilize online health inquiry services. Additionally, behavioral intention is shaped by other factors like PC (Perceived Convenience), EP (Efficiency Perception), and concerns about perceived risks.(D. Li et al., 2020)

- *Continuum of Service Delivery Mode*

The pandemic poses a significant danger to the treatment of severe mental diseases. To mitigate the risks associated with travel and exposure, an increasing number of healthcare professionals have started offering mental health treatments through remote methods.(Friis-Healy et al., 2021)

Community mental health facilities should devise ways to ensure the availability of psychotropic drugs and the continuation of essential services. Clinics should consider various service delivery options, considering their patients' needs, treatment preferences, and mental and physical risk factors. These different approaches to healthcare delivery are not mutually exclusive and can be combined to facilitate regular interactions without increasing the risk of viral transmission among clients and staff. Examples of these strategies include in-person care with the necessary safety precautions, clinic-based care in more extensive settings that permit physical distancing, clinic-based telehealth consultations within private clinic offices, clinic-based care by regional public health recommendations, and telehealth discussions with clients in their homes or the community.(Kopelovich et al., 2021)

It appears that digital health technology (DHT) has been rapidly implemented to offer remote treatment in response to an emergency, which could serve as a means to facilitate telemedicine while supporting the implementation of social distancing

measures.(Choukou et al., 2021) However, assessing functional improvements in home-based programs utilizing an unimodal videoconferencing system can be tricky since not all measures are appropriate and repeatable in such contexts without in-person evaluation. This underscores the need to establish integrated systems for accessing patient data and providing support using non-intrusive technologies. Data gathering and clinical support can be enhanced by using videoconferencing, mobile devices, and wearable technologies, reducing the need to introduce new technology to patients.(Lambert et al., 2021)

The COVID-19 initiative, on the other hand, emphasizes the significance for governments at all levels to understand that permitting increased "braiding and blending" of public expenditures is a critical component for efficiency. Braiding involves merging funds from multiple programs, with each program's management retaining oversight. In contrast, blending, although less common, entails amalgamating funds from different programs and managing them as a unified fund.(Butler, 2020)

Strengths and Limitations

Because of the type of study featured, this scoping review was confined to a narrative synthesis, which explored the hospital's marketing strategies during COVID-19. However, none measured the same outcomes. For this reason, an analytical synthesis of results could not be conducted since no studies shared the same outcome measures.

In the current study, we tried to provide readers with a comprehensive picture of the range and character of the concerns. One of the restrictions identified for this reason was that grey literature was not searched despite our interest in published scientific studies. This review concentrates on the article's content instead of the caliber of the research that has been issued—the scoping review aimed to include all available research, regardless of quality. Given the shift in consumer behavior brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, more research may be conducted to assess the caliber of existing hospital marketing strategy studies.

CONCLUSION

As a significant disruptive event, the COVID-19 pandemic provides a unique chance for leaders to take bold initiatives to promote short-term resilience and long-term sustainability. The hospital-at-home model exemplifies how healthcare systems should contemplate significant strategic initiatives to achieve system-wide, patient-centric, and transformative changes. There has been a consistent drive to leverage digital technologies to enhance healthcare service quality and reduce costs. Additionally, It is critical to determine whether these novel techniques may help boost clinical efficiency during the COVID-19 epidemic. This evaluation will be instrumental in determining the potential permanence of these emergency authorizations once the crisis subsides.

In order to protect patient safety, it's crucial to enhance and fortify online hospitals' quality control standards and regulations, including measures for safeguarding personal information. Their health consciousness slightly positively impacted patients' willingness to utilize Internet hospitals' online inquiry services, and their attitude toward the service mediated this influence. Additionally, it is essential that after the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government does not revert to its previous practices. Addressing the nation's

healthcare challenges, such as the opioid crisis, homelessness, and the complexities associated with an aging population, demands flexible funding and cooperation among various agencies.

Because digital health technology is such a novel phenomenon in hospital marketing strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic, additional study is required to evaluate its long-term effectiveness and determine the most effective tactics for increasing its benefits while lowering its hazards. This analysis will be more thorough if it includes patient opinions on the use of digital health technology, as well as particular hurdles, ethical issues, and drawbacks mentioned in the literature.

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