# The importance of health promotion

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Today's international healthcare service providers are faced with the enormous challenge of delivering the highest quality of care while improving efficiency by seeking new ways of working and to address long-term condition management with limited staff in a cost-effective post-COVID-19 era. A major demographic shift is unfolding due to scientific and medical advances. Population growth, changes in societal age and globally lower limb and mobility disorders are complex and currently managed by a range of health care services within the private and public sector. While acknowledging the cornerstone of an effective treatment programme, the needs of providers is to deliver both clinical and quality of life solutions. Meeting these goals while maintaining the fundamental principles of equity and ease of access to healthcare resources, represents a significant challenge.

At the same time public health services are having to cope with additional demands placed on them by changes in demographics, such as an ageing society and the increasing prevalence of long-term conditions such as leg ulcers and diabetes plus post-COVID–19 treatment waiting lists. Equally, social health is increasingly becoming recognised as a vital element of health development.

Regardless of age social media offers widespread access to health information, bringing with it the advantages of interactivity, information, and anonymity, see the snapshot of our social media analytics *(Figure 1)*. This figure show where our YouTube hits have originated from. These are fundamental for developmental aspects of social health, for example, those who use social media will have seen adverts and public information updates on social distancing, handwashing, and the COVID-19 vaccines in recent months. Hence, today's public are empowering themselves and studies indicate that looking for health or medical information is one of the most popular activities online.

As health professionals we need to recognise the general public's expectation and needs given the rising influence of social media on individual healthcare decisions such as where to go for care and what services to seek out, social media is attracting much attention.

Since 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way, we live and work and has brought technology to the fore as we rely increasingly on innovation and the public's expectation and need for preventative health promotion and education.

Public health promotion is the process or activity that facilitates the protection or improvement of the health status of individuals, groups, and communities. Also, its objective being to prolong life, improve quality of life and to reduce the effects of impaired physical health. Most importantly, early intervention through public health education and care can prevent serious damage in later life.

It has been estimated that around 50% of the western population are likely to get some form of venous disease during their lifetime. Many of us are distressed by the associated symptoms, for example, visible varicose veins, thread veins, swollen ankles, and discoloured patches of skin, as well as the effect venous disease can have on the appearance of a person's legs, they may also experience achy legs and itchiness. People who are either at risk of lower limb disorders, or already suffer from them will see significant benefit from public health promotion being delivered to aid prevention, early

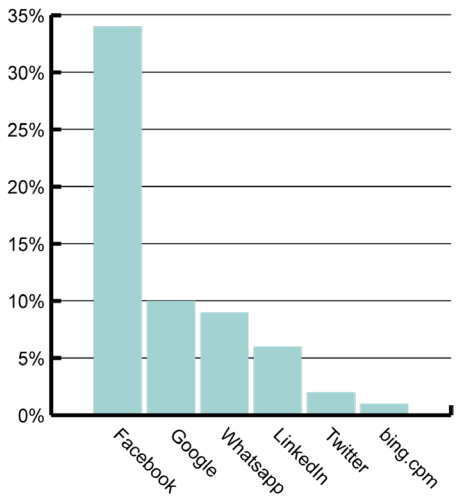



**Figure 1. Snapshot extracted from Leg Club YouTube analytics showing where watches originated from**

## SUPPORT US

The world is going through a very difficult time right now and charities need your support. To support The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, please visit this website: https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1001744

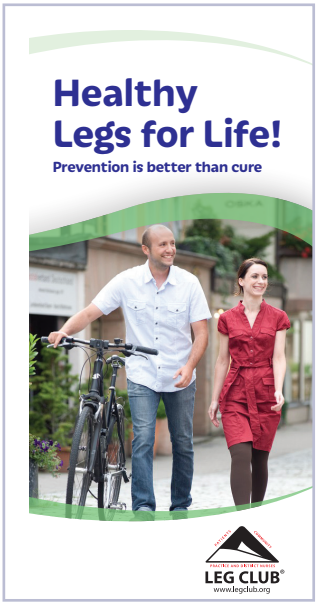
intervention and prevention of disease progression, which ultimately requires secondary care or acute interventions.

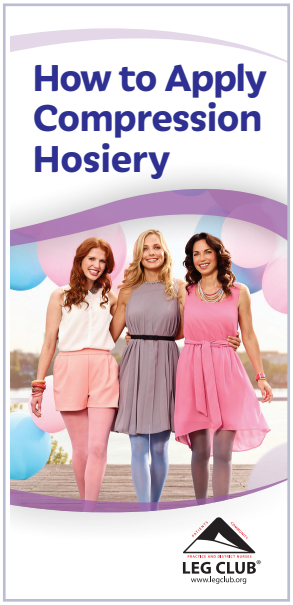
From its early beginnings in 1995 Leg Club staff have had a heightened awareness of the importance and added value of health promotion, evidence-based person-centred care, which ultimately leads to empowerment. The social model of care, on which the Leg Club philosophy is founded, emphasises wellness and maintenance of health, and places equal emphasis on social health, skilled communicate, within the facility of the Leg Club. The psychosocial Leg Club empowerment model assumes that to be truly healthy, individuals must bring about changes not only in their personal behaviour but also in their social situations and in the environment that influence their lives as they are the ones who are experiencing a medical problem and having to seek advice and accept treatment. The central theme of the progressive health promotion concept for individual wellbeing is the organisation of facilities, services, and staff around the needs of the primary population. This is being achieved through personal and direct involvement either through observation, participation or an activity designed to facilitate health promotion learning within a social Leg Club setting.

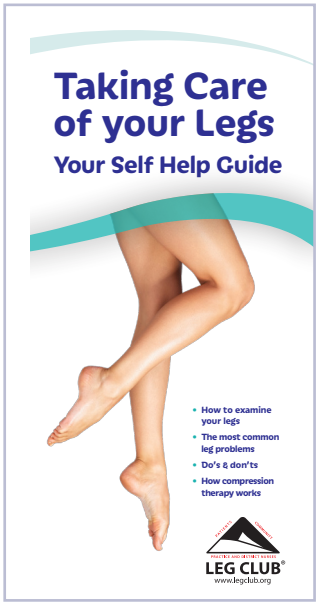
Effective communication is a key component in promoting health education; it provides the basis for development and education process in preparation for meeting the health needs of society. One of the most common forms of health communication today is that of information seeking. There are 70,000 health information websites available currently and more than 50 million people using them. Alongside their excellent clinical skills, heightened communication skills are used by the Leg Club staff who have developed and implemented a unique form of evidence-based health promotion and education

An object of The Leg Club Foundation (CRN1111259) is to implement best practice for the prevention of associated lower limb conditions to the public. The Leg Club movement has made considerable progress, transforming the level of awareness of its activities regarding health promotion and to date over 16,000 UK Leg Club members (patients) and their families have been encouraged and enabled through informative literature to get to "know their own legs". Recognising that there is a need to work with a mixed age population, the Leg Club Foundation undertakes health promotion initiatives to raise awareness of preventative management of all aspects of lower limb related problems to the public. We provide accessible information leaflets available via the Leg Club website: www.legclub.org This ensures that different socio-economic groups are given access to 'well-leg' prevention and education.

Visitors via the Leg Club website seeking advice or past/present treatments about their concerns, are always advised to seek advice from their local healthcare provider or clinical specialist as soon as possible. WUK




## CONFERENCE UPDATE

Leg Club conference 2022 will instead take place on September 28 and 29 2022. For more information, visit our website: https://www.legclub.org/