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Webvideos on topics of food intolerance

Introduction

This paper is based on the initial findings of a collaboration project between the Karl-Franzens-University and the Alpen Adria University, especially the departments of the 7. *Fakultät the Geschmackslabor* and the department of Science and Technology Studies about *Food Intolerance*. The *Geschmackslabor* hosted a conference [https://static.uni-graz.at/fileadmin/nawi-institute/Wissenschaftmitgeschmack/Tagungen/Tagung_2016/GL_Flyer_Nahrung_web.pdf] on 26th of November 2016, about this special topic, where several experts like Prof. Thomas Vigils, Prof. Sandra Holasek, Prof. Barbara Bohle etc. held lectures about several kinds of intolerances, allergies and the problem of superficial knowledge. Our team was interested to find out how deep the topic *Food Intolerances* infects society and where people get their knowledge. So we conducted an online survey with 829 participants (20/12/2016 – 30/03/2017). These are the proposed questions:

- How important is diet for you?
- Have you ever informed yourself about the topic *Food Intolerance*? If so why?
- How did you inform yourself?
- Have you used some of the web-sides mentioned below?
- Have you ever seen a video about the topic *Food Intolerance*?
- If you did, what was it like?
- Is there something you would like to add?

Especially the last question was in the focus of our interest. The content and discourse of the collected answers were analysed according to Mayring (2008) and Landwehr (2009) (cf. attachment). The initial outcome of the survey encouraged us to take a closer look at YouTube videos (Denzin 2013) as a source of information. We then compared the content of the comments in the comment section with the results of our study. Similarities were found between statements made by the survey participants, the analysed videos and comments beneath. Sharing experiences related to personal suffering and dissatisfaction with medical attendance and education seemed to be key aspects.

Survey outcome

The following graph chart shows how our participants informed themselves about the topic food intolerances.

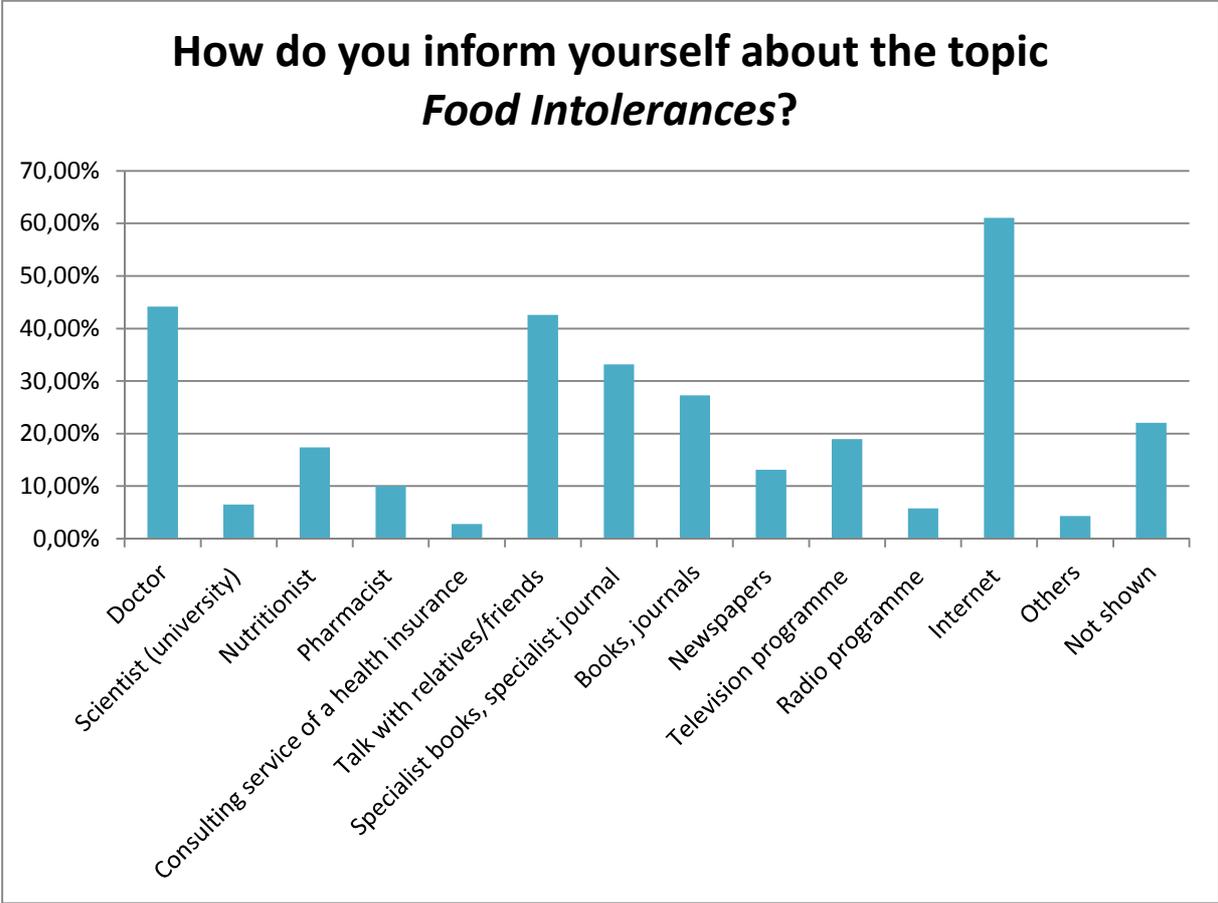


Figure 1

61,04 % of our participants were using the internet to get informed about the topic *food intolerance*. 53,08 % visited websites from doctors, the medical association or the ministry for Health and Women’s Affairs. 49,70 % visited blogs which were dealing with this topic.

Webvideo analyses

Only 9,77 % have watched videos about food topics and mentioned the platform YouTube¹ as a source of information. We decided to conduct an analysis of the quality of YouTube videos on the topic of *Food Intolerances*. We searched for videos with the following keywords: *Food Intolerance/ Food Intolerances*, lactose intolerance, fructose intolerance, gluten intolerance and celiac sprue. The number of videos with these keywords is in some cases striking. There were over 1260 hits for fructose intolerance alone and amount of available content is growing [https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=fructoseintoleranz]. Within this study, we have chosen, for each topic, those five videos that had the most views at the time. There was a broad range of videos, including app advertisement, promising relief to people who suffer from an intolerance, vlogs from private or lay persons, explanatory videos etc. We analysed all videos for their scientific content and graded them from 1 (high scientific content) to 5 (no scientific content, smattering of knowledge) accordingly. Criteria for grading included: type of video, presenter's scientific background and qualifications, presenter's scientific field of expertise, inclusion of scientific content, educational value, likes and dislikes rating of the video. From the sample auf 25 Videos, seven got the lowest grade of 5, three 4, five 3, four 2 and six videos were rates with a 1. The longest sample was from the vlogger Lebeglutenfrei.de and has a length of 22:03 minutes.

¹ The platform „YouTube was founded by employees of PayPal in 2005 and has undergone spectacular growth to become one of the top websites on the Internet (Welbourne/Grant 2016, S.707).“ The basis of YouTube is the so-called user-generated content model (UGC), which means that YouTube's content is shaped by users and consumers, whom could interact with each other. In 2006 when Google bought YouTube more and more global player, recognize the benefits of the platform. This has the result of an increase in the volume of professional generated content (PGC). Their content was „created by corporate entities to extend the reach of commercial branding (ebd., S.707).“ At this point amateurs of all genres were now confronted with videos from well-funded corporations like the Discovery Channel or market chains like DM. Especially DM is a player in the infomercial sector. DM has its own channel with several videos with a high quality in content about topics like lactose or fructose intolerance [<https://www.youtube.com/user/dmdeutschland>]. “

Name of YouTube video	Theme	Category	Views	Grade
Was tun bei Nahrungsmittelintoleranz?	<i>Food Intolerances</i>	Report	735	2
Nahrungsmittel Intoleranz Symptome und Diagnose	<i>Food Intolerances</i>	Promotion	575	4
mobile App: Ernährungs- & Symptom-Tagebuch Finde deine Nahrungsmittel-Intoleranz	<i>Food Intolerances</i>	Promotion	3421	3
zibb – Wissenswertes über Nahrungsmittel Intoleranzen	<i>Food Intolerances</i>	Report	290	2
Adieu Intoleranzen!! – SO habe ich es geschafft! (Fruktoseintoleranz & Laktoseintoleranz)	<i>Food Intolerances</i>	Vlog	7900	5
Ruthe.de – PETE Ep. 014 „Laktoseintoleranz“	Lactose Intolerance	Comedy	978016	1
dm erklärt: Laktoseintoleranz-diese Symptome gibt es & was tun, wenn man Milchzucker nicht verträgt?	Lactose Intolerance	Promotion/Vlog	399444	1
NilsHeinrich – Laktoseintoleranz	Lactose Intolerance	Comedy/Music Video	110739	2
Genuss ohne Reue – Milch und Schokolade auch bei Laktoseintoleranz	Lactose Intolerance	Report	11592	3
Laktoseintoleranz (Ausschnitt von bewusst gesund DAS MAGAZIN)	Lactose Intolerance	Report	10579	1
dm erklärt: Unverträglichkeit gegen Fructose (auch Fruchtzucker) – was ist Fructoseintoleranz?	Fructose Intolerance	Promotion/Vlog	131057	1
Fructoseintoleranz? 30-50 % haben eine Fructosemalabsorption	Fructose Intolerance	Vlog	26399	5
Fructoseintoleranz – Darmsanierung zur Heilung	Fructose Intolerance	Vlog	23256	5
Fructoseintoleranz oder warum kann ich keine Früchte essen...	Fructose Intolerance	Vlog	15713	5
Fructoseintoleranz, gesunde Ernährung bei Fructose-Unverträglichkeit & Allergie – KARL-ESS.COM	Fructose Intolerance	Vlog	13414	5
Glutenintoleranz und Glutenunverträglichkeit Symptome bei mir lebeglutenfrei.de	Gluten Intolerance	Vlog	5578	5
Gentest für Glutenintoleranz – Genetische Vorberatung für DNA+Gluten	Gluten Intolerance	Promotion	2890	4
Alles über Glutenintoleranz – Dr. Vilmos Fux Folge #048	Gluten Intolerance	Vlog	644	3
Selbsttest Veroval Gluten-Intoleranz	Gluten Intolerance	Promotion	33007	3
Gluten Intoleranz Therapie	Gluten Intolerance	Vlog	259	5

dm erklärt: Glutenunverträglichkeit oder Zöliakie – was ist das eigentlich?	Celiac sprue	Promotion/Vlog	146290	1
Backen mit glutenfreien Lebensmitteln / Zöliakie / Lebensmittelunverträglichkeiten	Celiac sprue	Vlog	54329	4
Zöliakie, Daheim und Unterwegs (Ausschnitt Sendung „Fit und Gesund“, WDR)	Celiac sprue	Report	31033	2
Glutenfreie Ernährung – Glutenunverträglichkeit / Zöliakie – Gut / schlecht? Ursachen – Weizenwampe	Celiac sprue	Vlog	33316	3
Zöliakie 1 (Ausschnitt Sendung „Sterntv“, RTL)	Celiac sprue	Report	15633	1

Figure 2

Unfortunately, even the seven videos with the grade 5 – no scientific content - are relatively popular. Except of one, they have a few 1000 clicks. All of them were made partly by professional vloggers. An analysis of the video contents, the interactions between the vloggers and their followers and the interaction between the followers themselves followed. During this process, some questions came up:

- Why are these videos popular?
- What makes them interesting or even authentic for their viewers?

We found two obvious points during the screening period: First of all the vlogger's were working with personalization. The media studies know this form of generating authentication from documentaries especially these once, which were working with contemporary witnesses (Elsaesser (2013), S. 63 f.). The female vlogger Freudestrahlend makes herself to a contemporary witness, because she is telling about a period of her life. This brought us to the second point: Vloggers make themselves to experts of a special theme. This could be emphasized by the vlogger him/herself. Three of the vloggers were fitness vloggers with their own programs. However, even the female vlogger Freudestrahlend could be a good example for healthy living. Her video shows a young, pleasant, skinny but healthy looking person. She had a lot of *food intolerances* and explains her way out of it. The whole video is high emotional. The emotionalization can also be seen in the headline "Adieu Intoleranzen!! – SO habe ich es geschafft!" The punctuations are significant and could be an evidence for emotions. All of the examined vloggers are working with emotions. To be emotional or to show emotions makes a person authentic. In that video she is speaking about getting rid of *food intolerances*. When she speaks about it, you can see that she is getting serious and her voice is calming down. This single situation shows a sad woman and it infects viewers, especially every person who also suffered from pain because of *food intolerance*.

The next vlogger named Kolja Barghoorn also works with emotions but this happens on another level. Barghoorn has no food intolerance. He can only imagine the unpleasant consequences. So he tries to show compassion underlines his talk with gestures, a plan, a graph and pictures. This is another way of getting authenticity. His video could be seen as an example for pseudoscience. The vlogger tries to be scientific correct, with his charts and the explanation of plans. Barghoorn mentions several times that he wants to help his viewers. His talk seems to be personal, because he is speaking directly with his viewers. It has to be said that the vloggers of our research were talking in a non-formal way to the audience. None of them are using the third form. They are using the word YOU. Barghoorn has a fitness vlog and the vlogger mentions that fructose and lactose intolerances cause obesity. In minute 1:02 a pie diagram is blended in on the bottom of the screen. It seems that some time before he and his team have conducted a survey. He presents the results with the help of a pie diagram. He explains the diagram and begins with the 43% who have problems with their motivation. That

was the topic of his last video. It is interesting that he wants to enlighten his viewers, because there is a lot of sciolism e.g. eggs are unhealthy or every food with a Bio emblem is healthy. Then there is a cut 6:14 and he explains that 30-70 % have both intolerances. He mentions the Apotheken Umschau² as basis for his video. They wrote that 30% have a fructose intolerance and 15 % a lactose intolerance. He shows consternation while he is playing with his fingers and frowns. Barghoorn mentions that his viewers are not guilty, because of having a sort of intolerance. He promises that they will lose weight easily if they figure out that they have intolerances and follow his steps. He mentions that you can do a selftest to find out, if you have an intolerance or not. His advice is to drink 500 ml apple juice in the morning, and then make ticks when you have one of these four problems. In the next video, he will talk about lactose intolerance and show the second test. He hopes that you have learned a lot. People should post the results beneath his video. He likes the discussion and ends with the words: make the test!

Another way to make things authentic is to mention doctors and other experts. Even other vloggers and alternative practitioners could be experts. The next vlogger Vegan mit Rohe Energy mentions that some people asked him about fructose intolerance and what they could do when they want to go raw and vegan. He speaks that you should get rid of it before you start this type of diet. Therefore, that is the reason for this video. He mentions that he is not a specialist and that he is lucky that neither Alexandra his wife nor he has a problem with fructose intolerance. He gives the advice to visit the YouTube channel from Aileen another vlogger. Aileen healed herself with a “rehabilitation of the intestine”.

2:08 he explains reasons for a fructose intolerance. He is speaking of a “leaking gut syndrome”. So particles get into the blood, which should not be there. He also mentions the candida yeasts. He had this kind of yeast but he expels it with the help of an alternative practitioner. After that, he has taken probiotics.

He is also taking healing clay or medicinal clay. 2:54 he recommends to visit a good alternative practitioner to speak with. He never mentions a doctor. If you have an allergy – he does not make a difference between intolerances and allergies – you should go to a professional immediately because it could be worse and because of the “leaking gut syndrome” you could get more and more allergies. At the end of the video, there were an advertisement for vitamin D3 oil and a small bubble with him and his wife in it and even the link for the next video about the vitamins D3 and K2. He wishes the best to get healthy again. He has a compassionate expression on his face.

² The Apotheken Umschau is a giveaway magazine with information about medicine, illnesses, therapies etc. The magazine could be found in several german and austrian pharmacies and also at the internet. [https://www.apotheken-umschau.de/]

Conclusions

YouTube offers laypersons with no professional background a space where they can load their videos and generate followers. However, it would be too simple to look at vloggers only as some kind of danger or as a source of smattering of knowledge, who reach a big audience because they seem that they were one of them (Watzlawick 1979, S 60 f.). Vlogger can also be a good source of information. Detailed analyses of their communication behaviours, their use of emotions, which are part of their authenticity and their rhetorical technics, have to be done in further projects. The outcome could be used to establish new forms of rhetorical trainings for doctors or nutritionists, which can help to improve a better relationship and new ways of treatments. Especially, doctors follow the concept to adapt their own competences as best as they can [<http://www.aerztekammer.at/fortbildung>].

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Web links

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIB9oO0pu20> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTMITJMjNc> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI9UMJFGNcE> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5z18bxoCzq> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBWD8y3qDzk> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iQah40Jufg> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXoGHAKxqm0> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt5cPe7OsmU> (5.10.2017)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SK4o_wm4HkY (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtnsG92QnVg> (5.10.2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80CedMoflD4> (5.10.2017)

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https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=fructoseintoleranz (5.10.2017)

<https://www.apotheken-umschau.de/> (5.10.2017)