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Health communication is one of the fastest developing areas of communication and health communication researchers have maintained an abiding and persistent interest in examining the intersections of people’s uses of media and the resulting influences on their behaviors. In this new age of widespread uses of social media, particularly Facebook, considerable attention has been directed to how the new media platforms are used for health communication purposes, especially weight loss management. Characteristically, much of the research in this area has been largely either quantitative or qualitative, with scarce use of mixed methods that promise more comprehensive results. Our presentation is based on a mixed methods research aimed at using a multiplicity of research methods to examine how cancer patients who are conscious of the health implications of chemotherapy and radiation treatments on their fertility use social media as learning and behavior-modification tools. Such a problem that involves examining people’s values, media use patterns, and the putative influence of health information can best be addressed through a mixed methods design. The two objectives of the research are: (1) to determine how cancer patients trying to save their fertility after treatments use the legacy media and social media; (2) to ascertain if there are significant differences among people who use the new social
media more. Undergirding these two objectives is our interest to examine people’s motivation in
seeking health information and watching/monitoring their fertility.

Ninety (90) research subjects, composed of equal numbers of men and women, will be
recruited from three Cancer Centers in Kenya. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected
using a standard media use instrument to elicit information about media preferences, media use
patterns, and self-reports of perceived media influences. In addition to the survey of
respondents’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, additional methods of data collection will
include ethnography (observing respondents at fertility clinics in the cancer centers), in-depth
personal interviews of 10% of the sample, and visits to respondents’ familiar health websites to
examine their content using online content analytics techniques. Using quantitative and
qualitative analyses tools (SPSS and Atlas.ti/NVivo), we shall provide a broad characterization
of the respondents’ media use patterns and address the two research objectives of cancer
patients’ fertility after treatments, use of the legacy and social media, and whether those who
prefer the new social media are different from their counterparts who favor the traditional/legacy
media. The results would have interesting implications for health communication, media use,
and cancer patients’ fertility watch behavior. These results will contribute to our increasing
understanding and appreciation of health communication as a field of study and a body of
theoretical knowledge. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods in this study promises to
offer more comprehensive and all-encompassing results that will make our findings more
relevant and applicable to the extant needs of the various publics including media people, policy
makers, public health personnel, and citizens needing more attention to health management
issues of infertility among cancer patients.