

MEDICINE INFORMATION PROVISION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: AN INNOVATIVE METHOD OF INCREASING PUBLIC ACCESS TO QUALITY INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICINES IN AUSTRALIA

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From Information to Intelligence

Introduction

- ▶ The quantity of health information available online can be overwhelming, and the quality can vary widely.^{1,2}
- ▶ NPS MedicineWise pharmacists deliver a national consumer evidence-based medicines information service in Australia called Medicines Line.
- ▶ Medicines Line aims to improve consumers' knowledge about medicines, promote quality use of medicines (QUM) and refer callers to appropriate health professionals.
- ▶ Promoting QUM assists consumers to minimise unnecessary medicine use and reduce adverse effects.
- ▶ Medicines Line has traditionally been conducted over the telephone but expanded in late 2013 to include a question-and-answer service via NPS MedicineWise Facebook page, known as Pharmacist Hour (PH).

Figure 1. NPS MedicineWise Facebook Pharmacist Hour Promotional Post.



Key messages

- ▶ NPS MedicineWise is meeting the needs of consumers in seeking healthcare information online.
- ▶ Facebook PH is an innovative approach to expand the delivery of QUM messages into the online space.
- ▶ Facebook PH partners with other healthcare organisations and links users to quality health information web resources (Figure 1).

Objectives

- ▶ This study aims to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of expanding the Medicines Line service onto Facebook.

Method

- ▶ Facebook related enquiries were analysed using the Medicines Line database (MiDatabank[®]) and reports supplied by the social media team at NPS MedicineWise between November 2013 and December 2017.
- ▶ Data on Facebook consumer reach (those to whom PH posts appeared on their feed) and engagement (those who liked, shared or commented on PH posts) were obtained and analysed from Facebook insights analytics reports related to the NPS MedicineWise Facebook account for the same period (Figures 2 and 3).

Results

- ▶ During the 188 PH posts, a total of 699 questions were answered, representing 2% of total enquiries received by Medicines Line.

Figure 2. Number of Facebook PH Posts and Questions (November 2013 - December 2017).

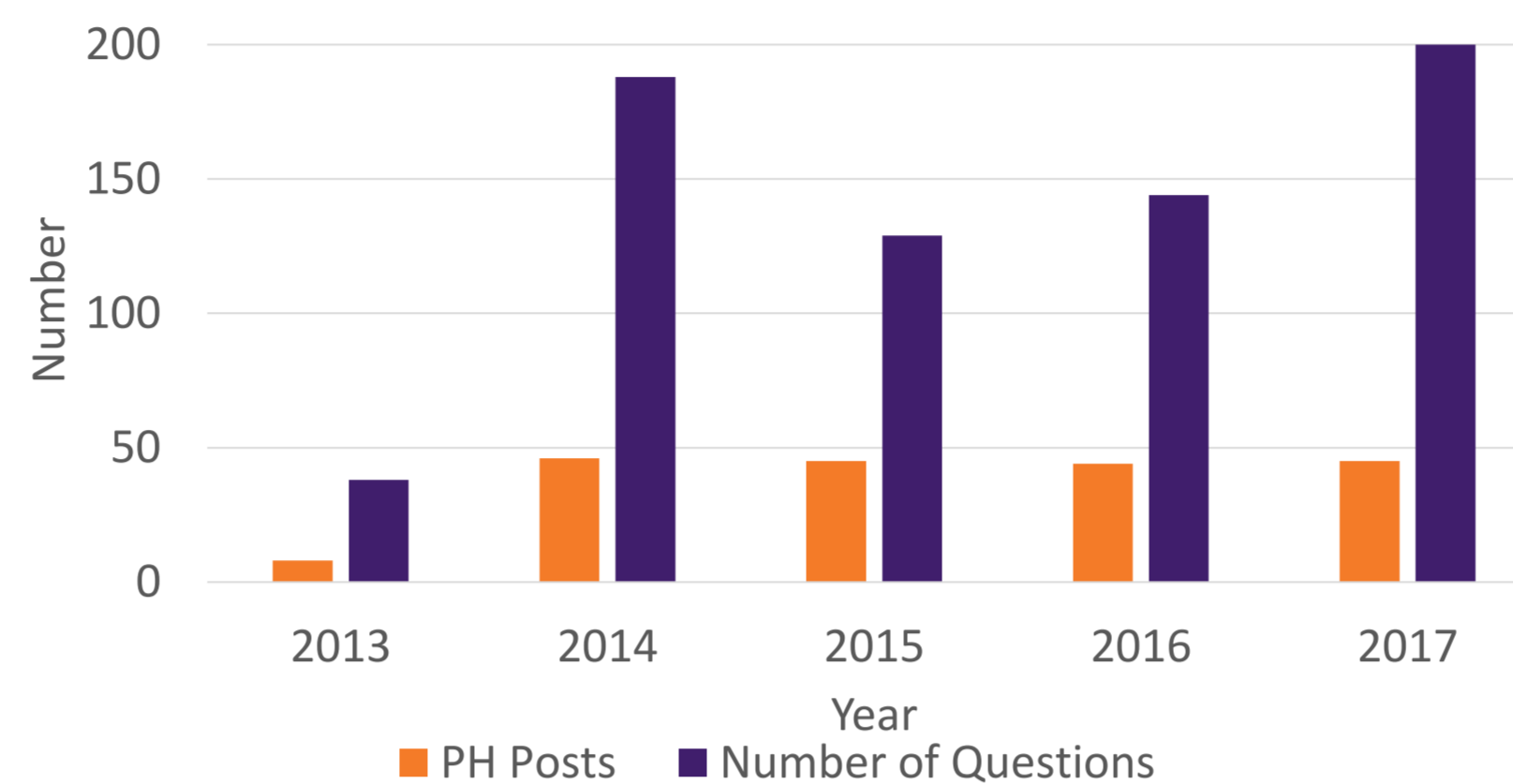


Figure 3. Facebook PH Consumer Engagement (November 2013 - December 2017).

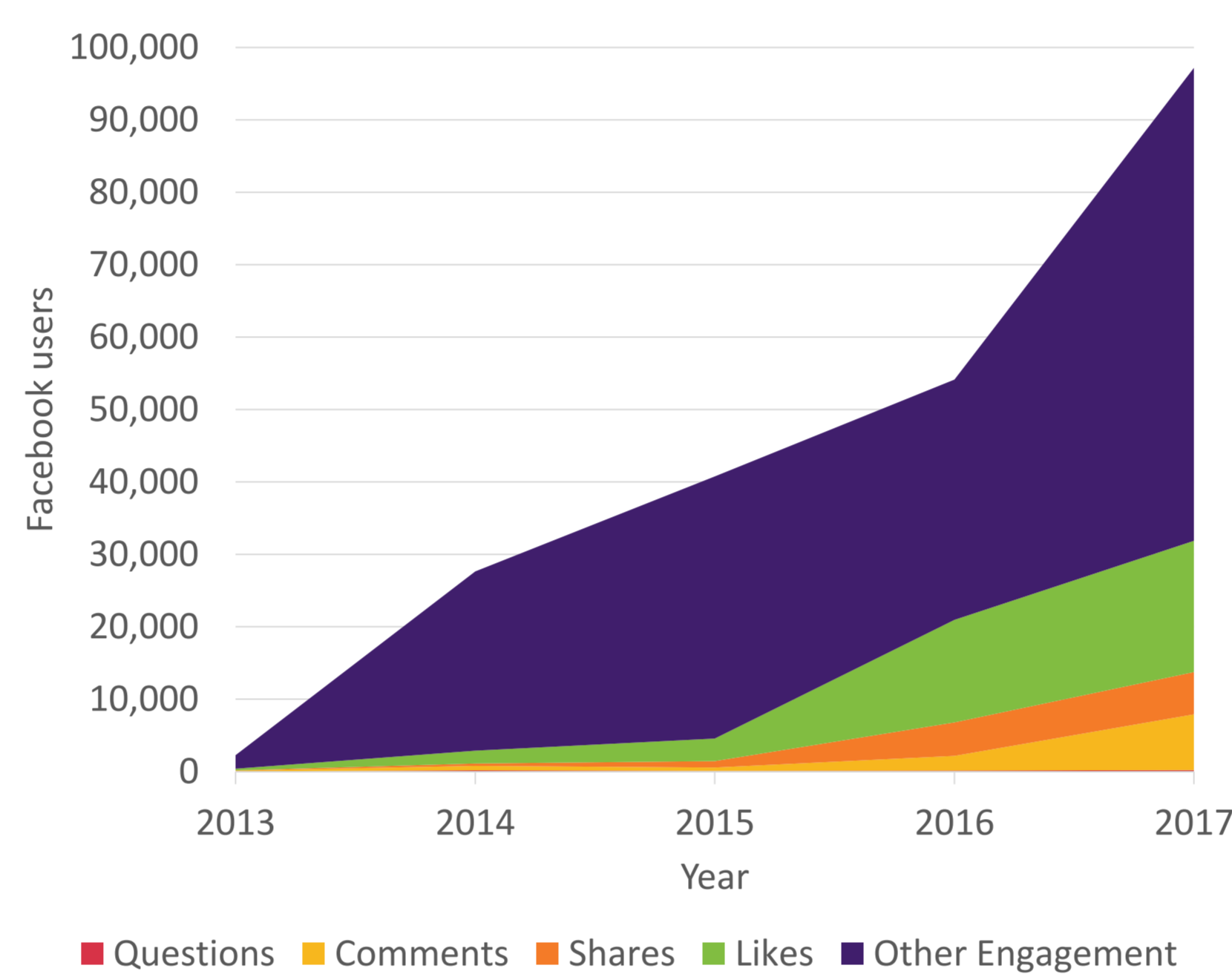
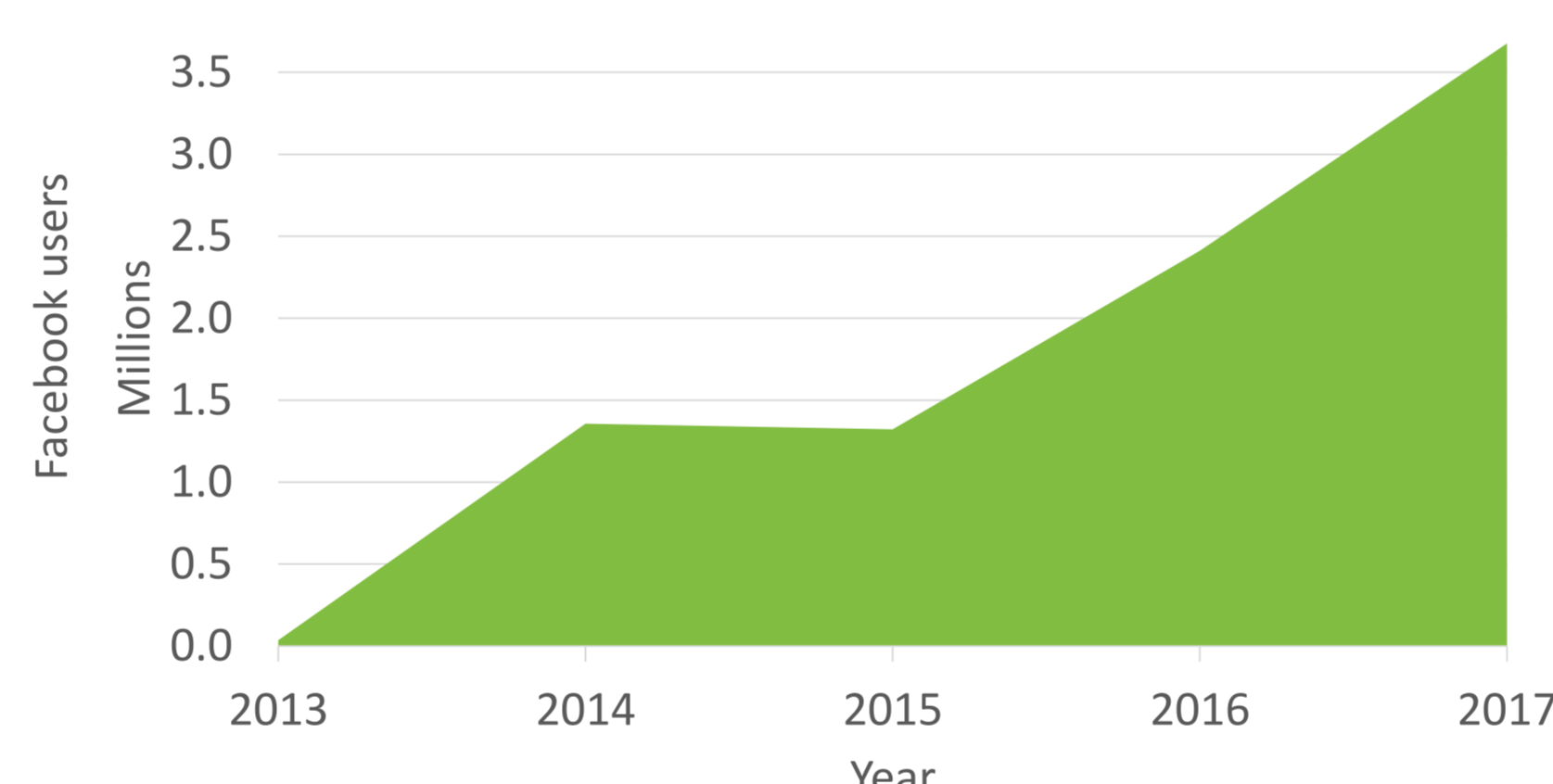


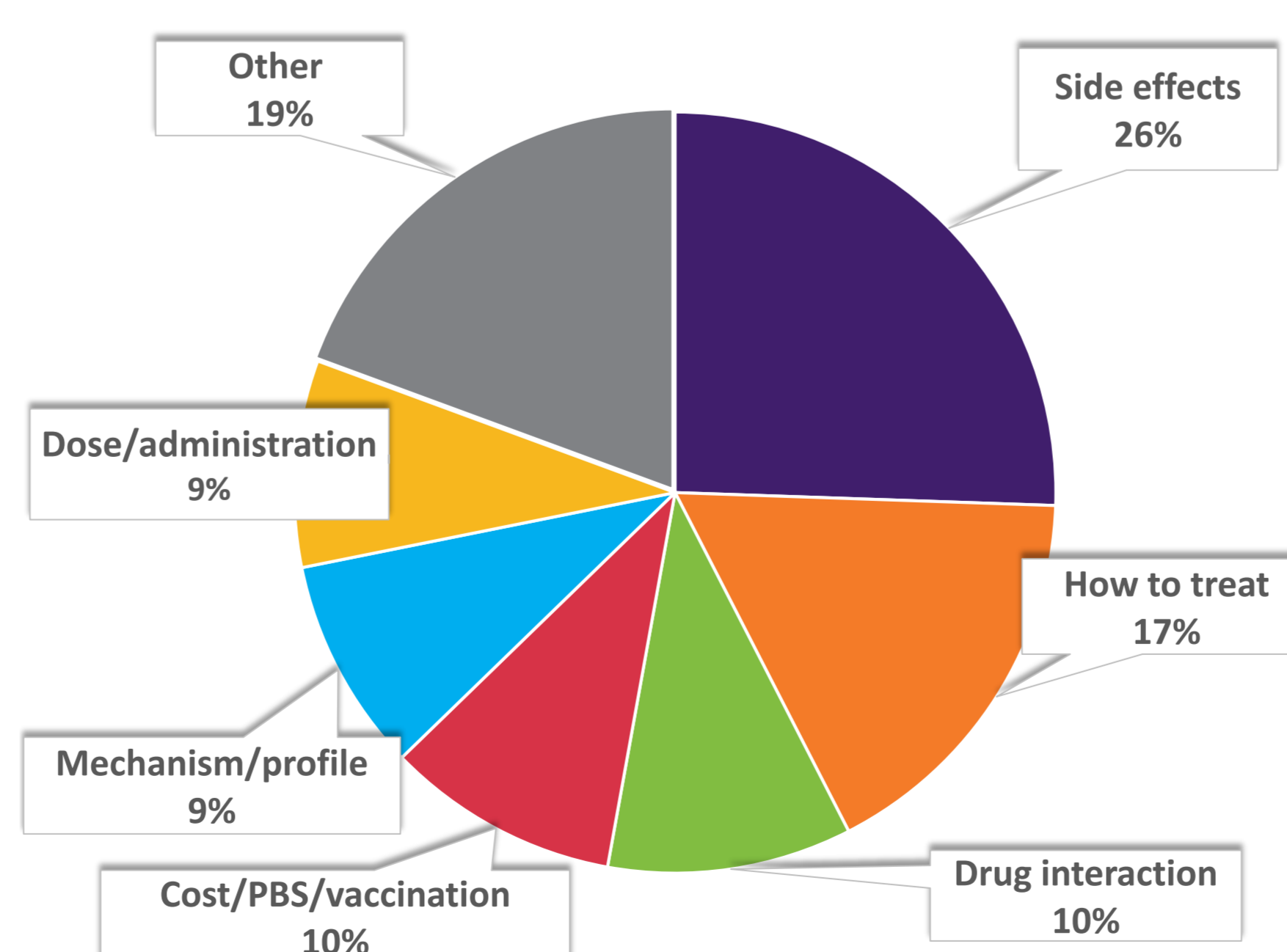
Figure 4. Extent of Reach* of Facebook PH Posts (November 2013 - December 2017).



*Reach is defined as number of Facebook users where PH posts appeared on their feed. These included paid posts.

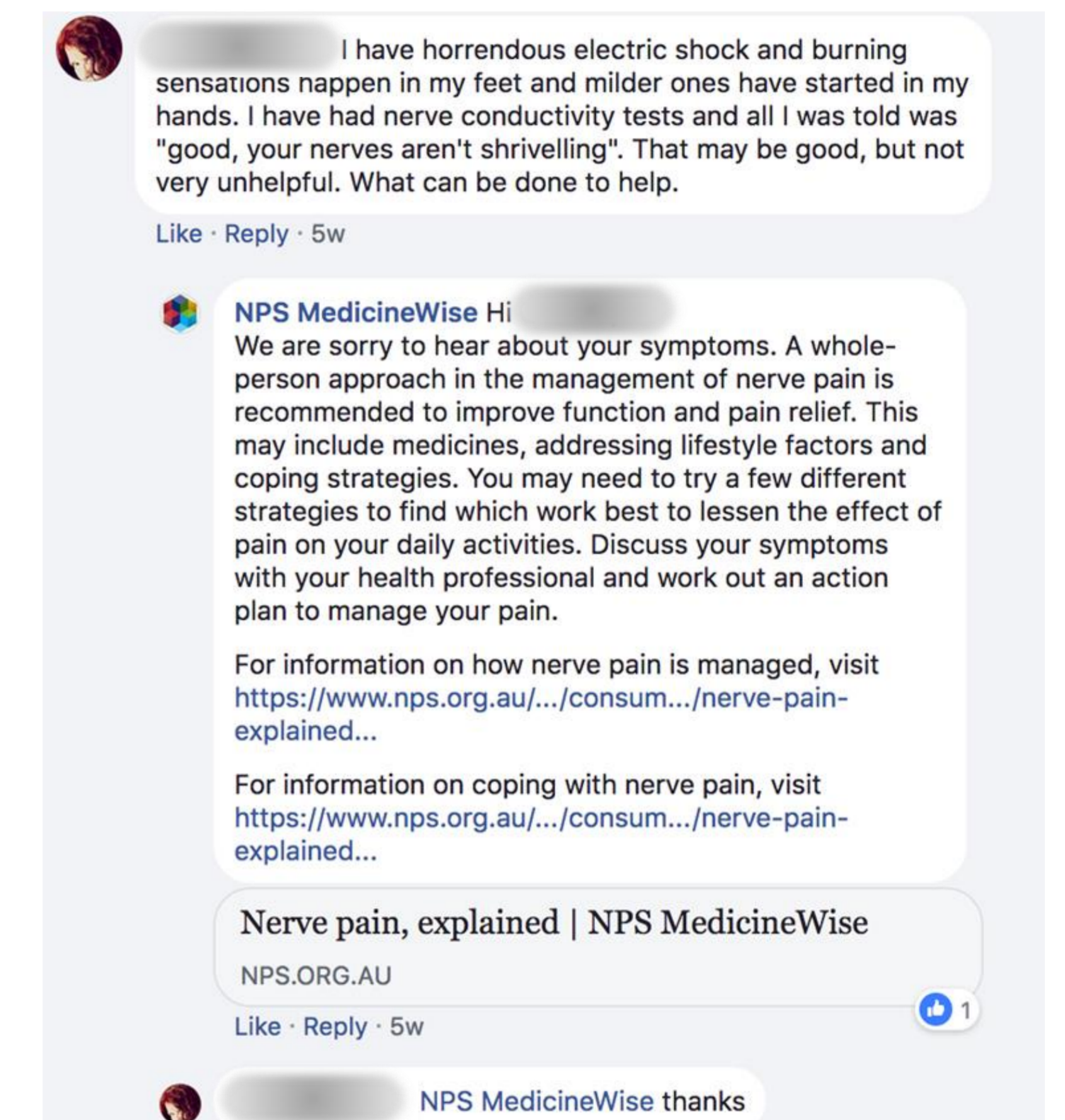
- ▶ The majority of online enquirers were female (>69%).
- ▶ Types of online enquiries (Figure 5) were similar to enquiries received by telephone for the same period.

Figure 5. Type of Enquiries to Facebook PH Post Questions (November 2013 - December 2017).



- ▶ Although number of questions on PH fluctuated (Figure 2), consumer engagement and reach continued to increase (Figures 3 and 4).
- ▶ Each enquiry engaged a minimum of 58 people and had a reach of 10,280.
- ▶ PH posts had a total reach of 3,675,558 Facebook users in 2017, an increase of 171% from 2014.

Figure 6. An Example of a Pharmacist Hour Post Question and answer.



Conclusions

- ▶ Through Facebook PH, Medicines Line has successfully expanded its medicine information service and achieved larger visibility of the service and brand.
- ▶ Medicines Line continues to have increasing levels of engagement by consumers through social media.
- ▶ Facebook PH increased collaboration with other health organisations and helped direct consumers to quality online health resources (Figure 6).
- ▶ Social media is an additional channel through which healthcare literacy can be improved and QUM messages can be effectively delivered strengthening NPS MedicineWise's objectives.
- ▶ Social media may be a useful channel for healthcare professionals and organisations to deliver quality health information and other services alongside their traditional methods.

References

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