

EVALUATION OF THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DENTISTRY

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ABSTRACT

A large part of day to day interaction takes place through social media. Social media is the way people communicate, look for and share information among all age groups. Social media has begun to proliferate across the fields of medicine and dentistry also. The use of social media seems to transform the way of interaction between the dentist and the patient and open up new avenues of communication. **Aim:** To evaluate the willingness to use the social media among patients, dentists, and their networks to advocate and educate about oral health care. To explore patients' and dentists' attitude towards social media usage in dentistry and to discover potential opportunities and challenges for dentists to adopt social media practices. **Material and method:** A cross-sectional study, Sampling technique: Stratified Random Sample size: 115 dentists, 115 patients. A close ended questionnaire was prepared and distributed among 115 dentist and 115 patients consisting of 10 sets of questions each for dentist and parents. **Result:** In this study, it was found that 55.38% of dentists were willing to use social media and their network to educate about oral health care and 39.12% parents were willing to use social media for the same. **Conclusion:** Pedodontists actively use social media to educate about oral health care while use of social media among parents is less.

KEY WORDS: Dentist, oral health, social media.

INTRODUCTION

Social media are the tools which support electronic conversation. According to *Scott and Jacka* "There is no single recognized definition of social media"¹. According to *Kaplan and Haenlein*, social media are "a group of internet based applications which is build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0."² Social media is an inexpensive, powerful, and significant way of using Internet-based tools. Social media is used to facilitate easy and broad communication and also it is used for sharing of information and opinions.^{1,2} The usage of social

media is good medium of communication. The health providers need to understand and adapt to social media and its use as a potential method of interacting with patients to provide health care.¹⁻³ The use of social media in health care education has mainly been an area of increasing interest as a means of better engaging and enhancing the learning of students. A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the ways in which the health care students informally use social media for educational purposes.⁴ Social media in dentistry has been used in training and development of dental professionals.⁷ Dental

education relies on online communication to help dental professionals to develop clinical skills.⁸ Previous studies have also highlighted that social media assists dentists to share area of knowledge with each other and aid professional networks.⁹ It also allows the professionals from different locations to connect with one another and to discuss important issues and obtain also to obtain feedback. These activities benefit lifelong learning and professional development.¹⁰

Dental professionals can use social media as an effective and comparatively inexpensive means of communication, for marketing activities¹¹. Traditionally, dental practices would use to primarily advertise their services using local yellow pages (i.e, telephone directory of local businesses and services) or else they would put the promotion information on a small note in the window of dental surgeries. In the modern years of digital transformation, social media has offered a forum for public communication that dentists can influence to conduct marketing activities and to in a timely and cost-efficient way.^{12,13}

Hence, this study aimed to assess to evaluate the willingness to use of the social media among Patients and Dentists.

AIM

- To evaluate the willingness to use of the social media among Patients and Dentists.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design: A cross-sectional study

Sampling Technique: Stratified Random Sampling Method

Sample size

- 115 Dentists
- 115 Patients

A close ended questionnaire was prepared and distributed among 115 dentist and 115 patients consisting of 10 sets of questions each for dentist and parents.

RESULTS

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 230 participants where 115 were Dentists and 115 were Patients. A questionnaire was prepared consisting of 10 sets of questions each for dentist and parents. During Survey among Dentist, 67.82% were willing to share information regarding prevention of dental caries and treatment through use of social media while 32.17% were not. (**Table no. 1**) Similarly 73.04% Dentists think that social media will help you their better establishment while 26.95% disagreed with this fact. (**Table no. 1**) On enquiring that weather use of social media helps in making parents better understand the various aspect of dental treatment, 78.04% dentist were in favor of it while 21.73% were not. (**Table no. 1**) During Survey among Patients 54.78% believe that social media is helpful for dental information while 45.21% did not think so. (**Table no. 2**) Similarly 49.56% think that social media is easy way to approach the dentist while 50.43% were not in favour of it. (**Table no. 2**)

In this study it was found that 55.38% of Dentists were willing to use social media and their network to educate about oral health care and 39.12% parents were willing to use social media for the same. (**Graph 1**)

DISCUSSION

Several studies discussed about the professionalization of the use of social media by the dentist, along with the effectiveness of communication, education of patients, their perceptions and attitudes as well as studies concerning treatment experiences, ethical skills, and standards of professional practice. Numerous studies explored the different ways in which social media networks can help the dentist but also hamper the practice of the dentist. Some studies explored the perspectives on the management of dental fear and anxiety particularly in pediatric patients.¹⁴⁻²¹ Several dental practitioners have their own practice websites and Facebook pages.

Table no. 1:- Questions for Dentist

	YES	NO
1) Do you have a personal social media account?	88.69%	11.30%
2) Would you be willing to share information regarding prevention of dental caries and treatment?	67.82%	32.17%
3) Would you like to share video regarding various dental treatment aspect?	46.95%	53.04%
4) Have you ever posted video of treatment carried by you?	6.08%	93.91%
5) Do you think the social media will help you for better establishment?	73.04%	26.95%
6) Would you like to use social media for making parents better understanding of various aspect of dental treatment?	78.04%	21.73%
7) Does social media will be able to build trust and confidence between dentist and parents?	46.95%	53.04%
8) Does posting video and sharing information will help to showcase your leadership?	46.95%	53.04%
9) Do you think social media is easy and best way to interact with parents?	36.52%	63.47%
10) Do you think social media is beneficial for promotion of clinic?	62.60%	37.39%

Table no.2:- Questions for Parents

	YES	NO
1) Do you use social networking site on the internet?	72.17%	27.82 %
2) Do you have a personal social media account?	67%	33%
3) Do you ever visit any Dentist's social media account?	20%	80%
4) Do you ever visit on social media before going to dentist?	37.39%	62.60%
5) Do you believe social media is helpful?	54.78%	45.21%
6) Do you think social gives platform that will help you to communicate with dentist?	20%	90%
7) Do you ever compare the different treatment modality with what your dentist say on social media?	15.62%	84.34%
8) Do you think social media will help you to overcome fear and anxiety associated with dental visit?	15.62%	84.34%
9) Do you find the clinic Same as you see on social media?	39.13%	60.86%
10) Do you think social media is easy way to approach the dentist?	49.56%	50.43%

They post their practice opening hours, updates on health topics and often, testimonials from satisfied patients.²⁴

There is inadequate use of social media as a means to facilitate communication between dentists and their patients.⁷ The current findings showcase that both dentists and patients remain somewhat hesitant to connect with each other as friends on social media.^{7,22} The most common source of media is Facebook which is typically used to connect with friends and family²³. The findings of the present study highlight that dentists value social media as useful marketing tool (73%). On the contrary, as the target audience, most patients do not consider social media as part of their decision-making process (20%). Similarly 46.95% Dentist believed that social media will be able to build trust and confidence between dentist and parents. About 49.56% parents think that social media is easy way to approach the dentist.

Presently there is a degree of importance about raising awareness of the risks and benefits of social media for professional practice. All dental practitioner, before they tweet or post a comment or photo in any context, should know to pause and reflect. The Dentist should be enabled to refuse permission when an inappropriate content or comment to be posted on photograph. Very little research has been conducted on how best to teach or increase awareness of e-professionalism.²⁶ One email survey of 221 educators which was conducted across five different dental schools in the US found that the majority of university faculty used social media for personal use and not educational purposes and so it might not necessarily act as positive role models of professional online communications.^{17,27}

CONCLUSION

Social media are very popular among the study participants. (Dentist and Parents). Social media will continue to develop proper social and

professional interactions between practitioners and the public in the years to come.

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