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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ATOPIC DERMATITIS

DISRUPTED SKIN, DISRUPTED TRUST

The Consequences of Social Media on Dermatology Patients and Practitioners

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- No conflict of interest to endorse

THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Access to medical knowledge has greatly expanded through **online health-related information** on online platforms and apps: Google, Instagram, Facebook, & TikTok.

Despite its advantages, the **accuracy, quality,** and **use** of such information can vary significantly across different patient groups.

Why is dermatology susceptible? Skin conditions have unique visibility to the naked eye

- Aesthetic procedures
- Before/after photos
- Skin diseases of *chronic courses*, like Acne or Atopic dermatitis, that can cause *cosmetic problems* like scarring or adverse reactions

Objectives:

- To explore current trends in social media use as a resource for health-related information
- To understand how this affects patients and dermatologists

Retrieved from: https://safimirandenver.com/russian-lip-filler/

THE RISE OF “SKINFLUENCERS”

The Infodemic

The **Journal of Clinical Aesthetic Dermatology** estimated that a **staggering 90%**, or majority of patients, indicated utilizing the internet to research information about their dermatological condition.

Approximately 74% of individuals researched their dermatological condition before visiting a dermatologist (2025).

However, many self-proclaimed social media ‘‘skin-care experts’’ or ‘‘skin-fluencers’’ lack qualifications, and the majority of dermatologic advice on social media is provided by non-dermatologists.

AAD JAAD Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology

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RESEARCH LETTER · Volume 83, Issue 6, P1840-1842, December 2020

Dermatology without dermatologists? Analyzing Instagram influencers with dermatology-related hashtags

Varun Ranpariya, BA [a] · Brian Chu, BS [b] · Ramie Fathy, AB [b] · Jules B. Lipoff, MD [c]

Affiliations & Notes Article Info Linked Articles (2)

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Show Outline

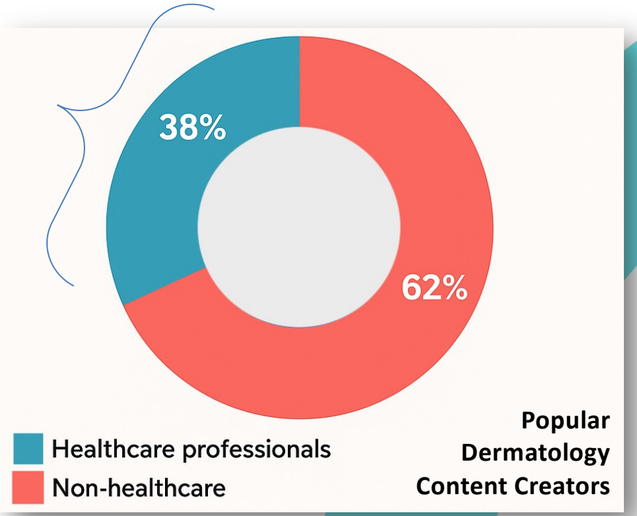
To the Editor: The general public is increasingly turning to social media for health information, with Instagram representing an especially popular and growing forum for education and support communities.[1] However, serious concerns remain about reliability and accuracy. In this study, we sought to characterize the credentials of dermatology influencers on Instagram, that is, accounts creating the most popular dermatology content.

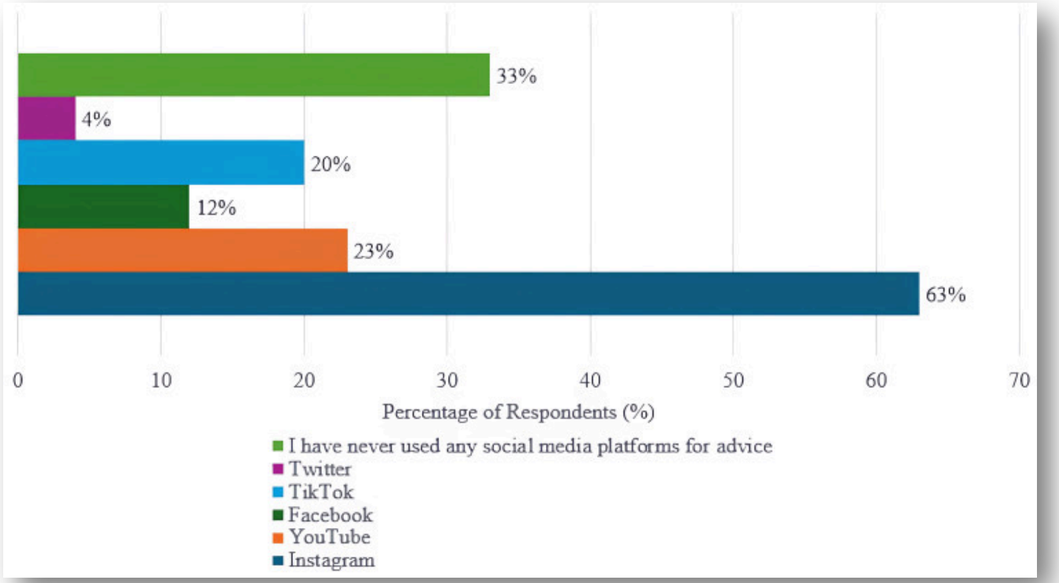
Highlighting a clear gap and a lack of presence from experts in the field.

There are minimal regulations on health-related posts on social media. This commentary, published in JAAD in 2020, found:

- **Health care professionals** comprise only **38%** of Instagram accounts with popular dermatology content
- **Board-certified dermatologists** account for just 4% of these health care professionals
- **Credentials were miss**ing for 27% of healthcare professionals

- 4% are board-certified dermatologists
- 27% missing credentials

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Percentage of Respondents (%)
I have never used any social media platforms for advice
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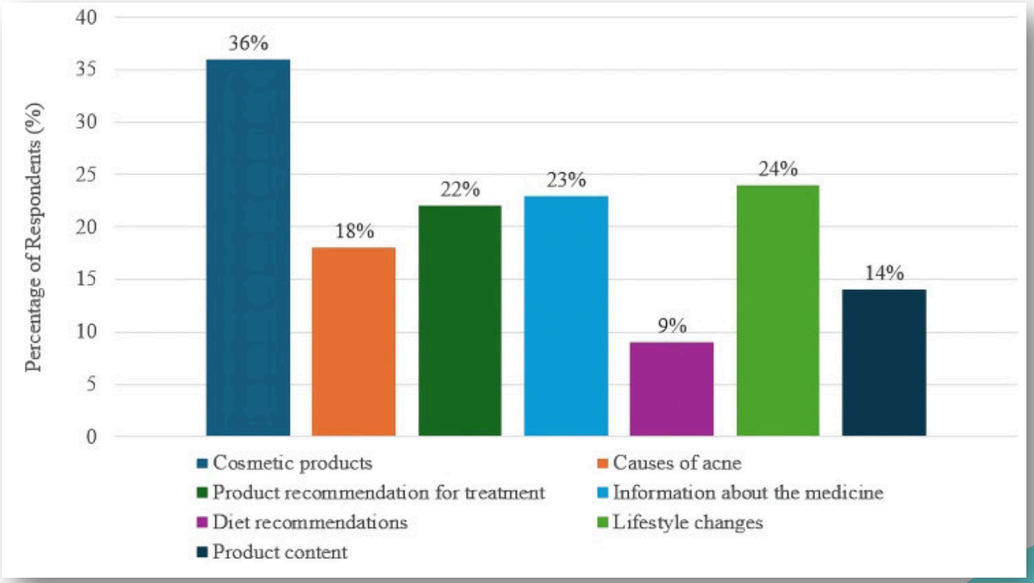
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Cosmetic products
Causes of acne
Product recommendation for treatment
Information about the medicine
Diet recommendations
Lifestyle changes
Product content

Current Dermatology Reports (2021) 10:97–104
https://doi.org/10.1007/s13671-021-00343-4

DERMATOLOGY AND ITS USE IN SOCIAL MEDIA (R DELLAVALLE AND C PRESLEY, SECTION EDITORS)

Check for updates

Social Media in Dermatology and an Overview of Popular Social Media Platforms

Mindy D. Szeto[1] · Andrina Mamo[1] · Antara Afrin[2] · Michelle Militello[3] · Cara Barber[4]

Accepted: 20 August 2021 / Published online: 19 October 2021

Abstract

Purpose of Review Social media provides an accessible and increasingly popular avenue fo networking, and outreach in dermatology. We provide an overview of prominent social applications or apps, as well as a discussion of their influence and implications for the fiel

Recent Findings The various collaborative features of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTo emerging platforms have proven appealing to organizations and users seeking dermatol

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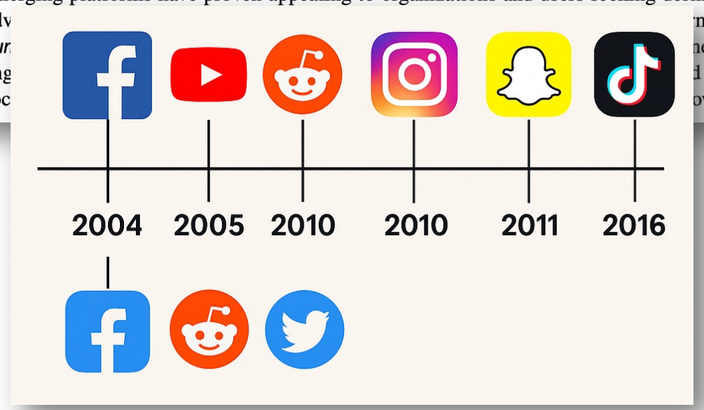

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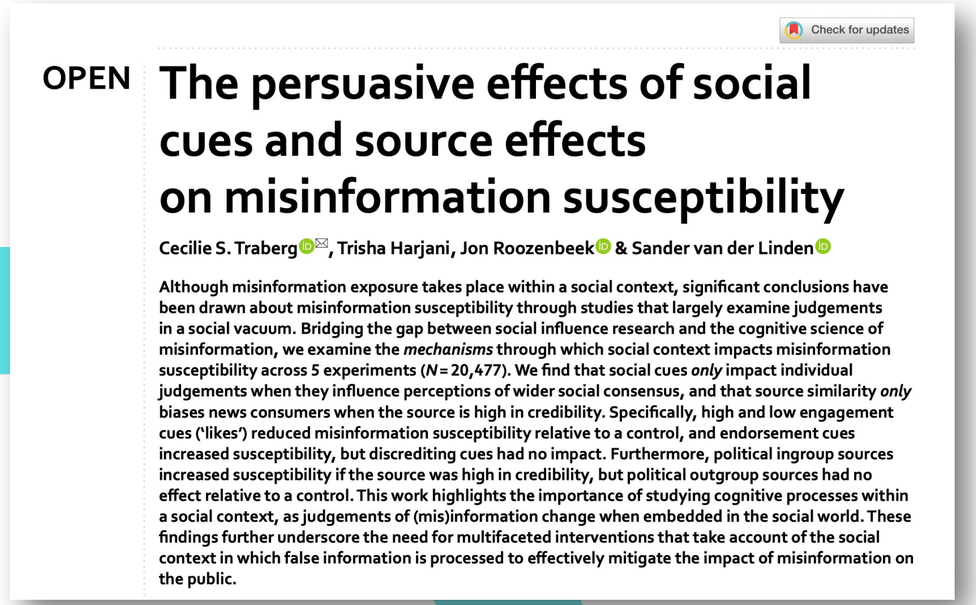
Table 1 This table is an abbreviated breakdown of the key social media platforms discussed, number of users, and most pertinent dermatology related content that can be found on each for quick reference

Social media platform	Number of active users	Current dermatology-related uses on each application
Facebook	2.85 billion	•Disease-specific support pages •High impact journals sharing content •Dermatology residency information
Instagram	1.074 billion	•Disease-specific hashtags and discussion •Photo/videos of dermatologic information and procedures •High impact journals sharing content •Product promotion •Dermatology residency information
Twitter	199 million	•Disease-specific support pages •High impact journals sharing content •Discussion of dermatology topics
TikTok	1 billion	•Product promotion •Photo/videos of dermatologic information and procedures
YouTube	2.1 billion	•Product promotion •Photo/videos of dermatologic information and procedures
Snapchat	280 million	•Photo/videos of dermatologic information and procedures
Reddit	430 million	•Disease-specific support pages

- While more physicians are using social media to educate and engage in patient outreach, the platform has been prone to a **flood of misinformation** presented by non-healthcare providers
  - Likely related **commercial content** from businesses on Instagram
  - A significant number of Instagram posts are promotional or advertising
- A study of dermatology-related hashtags found that **only 5%** of 146 unique influencers identified were dermatologists
- Analyzing top Instagram dermatology posts indicated that **only 35%** of unique posters were healthcare workers

WHAT'S ACTUALLY EFFECTIVE?



Check for updates

OPEN

The persuasive effects of social cues and source effects on misinformation susceptibility

Cecilie S. Traberg, Trisha Harjani, Jon Roozenbeek & Sander van der Linden

Although misinformation exposure takes place within a social context, significant conclusions have been drawn about misinformation susceptibility through studies that largely examine judgements in a social vacuum. Bridging the gap between social influence research and the cognitive science of misinformation, we examine the *mechanisms* through which social context impacts misinformation susceptibility across 5 experiments ($N = 20{,}477$). We find that social cues *only* impact individual judgements when they influence perceptions of wider social consensus, and that source similarity *only* biases news consumers when the source is high in credibility. Specifically, high and low engagement cues ('likes') reduced misinformation susceptibility relative to a control, and endorsement cues increased susceptibility, but discrediting cues had no impact. Furthermore, political ingroup sources increased susceptibility if the source was high in credibility, but political outgroup sources had no effect relative to a control. This work highlights the importance of studying cognitive processes within a social context, as judgements of (mis)information change when embedded in the social world. These findings further underscore the need for multifaceted interventions that take account of the social context in which false information is processed to effectively mitigate the impact of misinformation on the public.

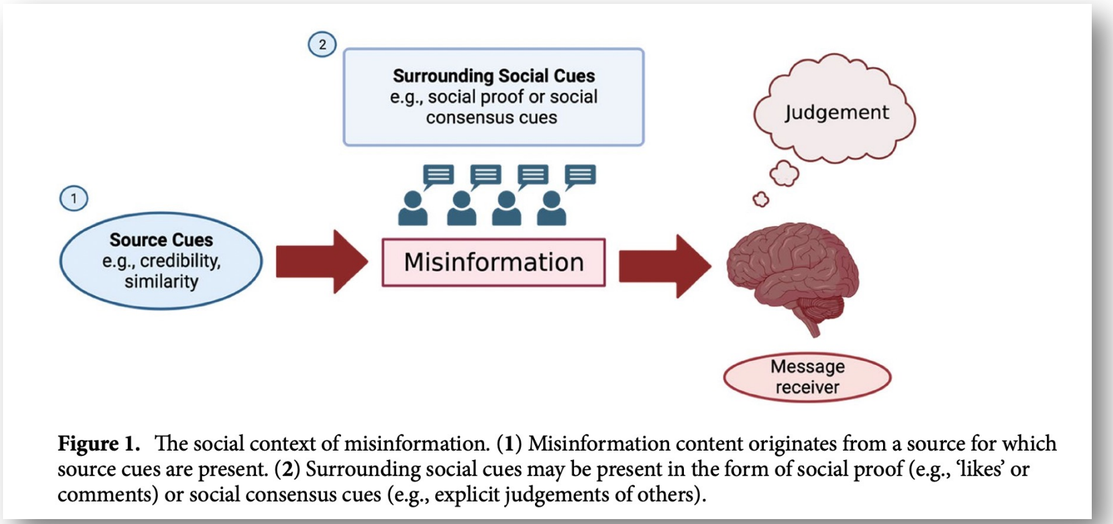


Figure 1. The social context of misinformation. (**1**) Misinformation content originates from a source for which source cues are present. (**2**) Surrounding social cues may be present in the form of social proof (e.g., 'likes' or comments) or social consensus cues (e.g., explicit judgements of others).

This review, published in Nature research, reviewed the effects of cues on misinformation susceptibility, working to understand misinformation within a social context.

Findings:

- High and low conditions ('likes') had **no significant impact**
- Discrediting comments or cues had **no significant impact**
- Endorsement cues (comments under the posts) **had an impact** and *increased* misinformation susceptibility

- They manipulated the amount of likes, the comments etc.
- They found that when social media users are exposed to social cues that indicate that others believe misinformation, this leaves them more vulnerable to misjudging the information as reliable.

THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Positive Impacts:

- Education and awareness (e.g., sun protection campaigns, acne stigma reduction)
- Patient engagement and accessibility

Negative Impacts:

- Misinformation and non-scientific advice
- Over-commercialization of skincare and procedures

Review > J R Coll Physicians Edinb. 2024 Sep;54(3):231-235.
doi: 10.1177/14782715241261736. Epub 2024 Jun 12.

The rise of medical influencers: The pros and the cons

Isaac Ks Ng [1 2], Christopher Thong [2 3], Li Feng Tan [2 4], Desmond B Teo [2 5 6]

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 38867442 DOI: 10.1177/14782715241261736

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MISINFORMATION ON PATIENTS

Exposure to health misinformation online can lead patients to delay or avoid professional care, self-treat with unverified methods, or alter prescribed treatments—often resulting in poorer outcomes and reduced adherence to evidence-based management.

- **Fear promotion**
- **Altered attitudes**
- **Altered treatment decisions**
- **Self-diagnosis**
- **Delayed care**

HOW MISINFORMATION AFFECTS PATIENTS

- **Delayed or avoided care/self-treatment**
  - Patients exposed to inaccurate online advice **often try home remedies** or *stop evidence-based treatments*, delaying appropriate care. This is well described across dermatology (e.g., topical-steroid narratives)
- **Altered treatment decisions & non-adherence**
  - Social content can **change willingness** to start or continue medications (some studies report a nontrivial proportion of patients altering treatment plans after social media exposure). This effect **can reduce adherence** and worsen outcomes.
- **Selective help-seeking and self-diagnosis.**
  - Many patients arrive **"pre-diagnosed"** from social feeds or patient groups, sometimes convinced of diagnoses not supported by clinical criteria (e.g., self-diagnosed topical steroid withdrawal). This shapes the consultation agenda.

Investigating Topical Steroid Withdrawal Videos on TikTok: Cross-Sectional Analysis of the Top 100 Videos

Firas Haddad [1,#], William Abou Shahla [2,#], Dana Saade [2,✉]

Editor: Amaryllis Mavragani

Reviewed by: Rabih Nayfe, Christina Bergqvist

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Influence of Social Media and Internet on Treatment Decisions in Adult Female Acne Patients: A Cross-Sectional Survey Study

Sümeyre Seda Ertekin [1,✉], Nazmiye Selin Salici [1], Vildan Manav Bas [2], Müge Göre Karali [3], Ecem Zeliha Ergün [4], Elif Bal Avcı [5], Ebru Sarıkaya Tellal [2], Esma Inan Yüksel [6], Günel Rasulova [1], Duygu Erdil [2]

▸ Author information ▸ Article notes ▸ Copyright and License information

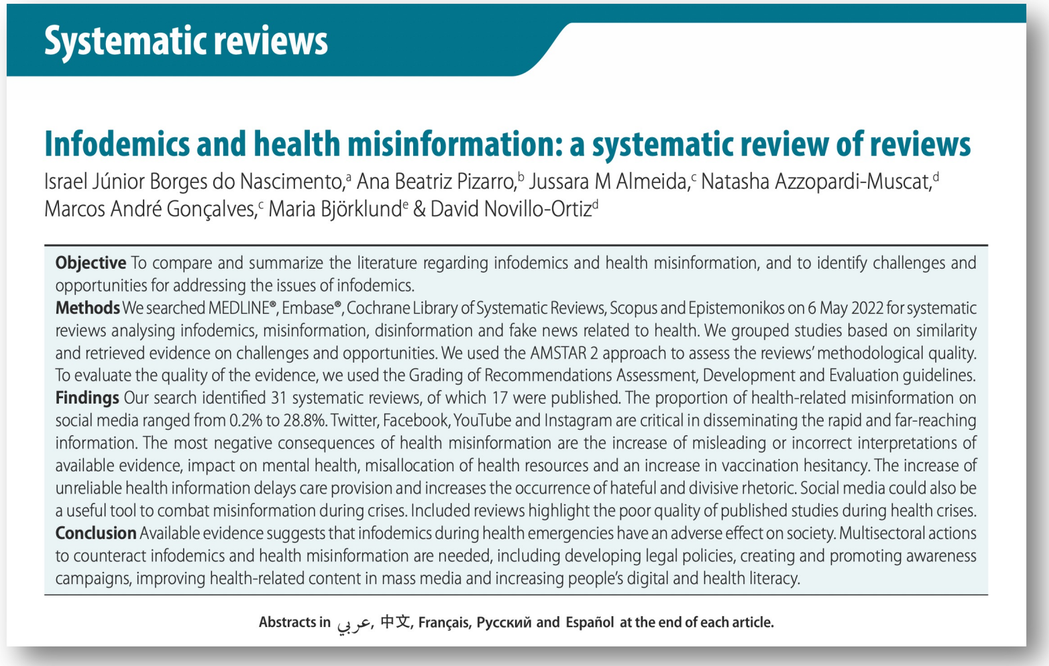
PMCID: PMC11314130 PMID: 39122512

Abstract

Introduction

Adult female acne is a chronic condition that significantly impacts quality of life. The content on social media can influence patients perception of their disease and serve as a channel through which they may seek or obtain treatment options.

EFFECTS?



Systematic reviews

Infodemics and health misinformation: a systematic review of reviews

Israel Júnior Borges do Nascimento,[a] Ana Beatriz Pizarro,[b] Jussara M Almeida,[c] Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat,[d] Marcos André Gonçalves,[c] Maria Björklund[e] & David Novillo-Ortiz[d]

Objective To compare and summarize the literature regarding infodemics and health misinformation, and to identify challenges and opportunities for addressing the issues of infodemics.
Methods We searched MEDLINE®, Embase®, Cochrane Library of Systematic Reviews, Scopus and Epistemonikos on 6 May 2022 for systematic reviews analysing infodemics, misinformation, disinformation and fake news related to health. We grouped studies based on similarity and retrieved evidence on challenges and opportunities. We used the AMSTAR 2 approach to assess the reviews' methodological quality. To evaluate the quality of the evidence, we used the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation guidelines.
Findings Our search identified 31 systematic reviews, of which 17 were published. The proportion of health-related misinformation on social media ranged from 0.2% to 28.8%. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are critical in disseminating the rapid and far-reaching information. The most negative consequences of health misinformation are the increase of misleading or incorrect interpretations of available evidence, impact on mental health, misallocation of health resources and an increase in vaccination hesitancy. The increase of unreliable health information delays care provision and increases the occurrence of hateful and divisive rhetoric. Social media could also be a useful tool to combat misinformation during crises. Included reviews highlight the poor quality of published studies during health crises.
Conclusion Available evidence suggests that infodemics during health emergencies have an adverse effect on society. Multisectoral actions to counteract infodemics and health misinformation are needed, including developing legal policies, creating and promoting awareness campaigns, improving health-related content in mass media and increasing people's digital and health literacy.

Abstracts in عربي, 中文, Français, Русский and Español at the end of each article.

Negative effects via altering people's attitude towards the situation:

- Distorting the interpretation of scientific evidence
- Opinion polarization and echo chamber effects
- (that is, the formation of groups of like-minded users framing and reinforcing a shared narrative)
- Promoting fear and panic
- Increasing mental and physical fatigue of population
- Decreasing credibility of circulating information on

IMPACT ON PRACTITIONERS

- Need for constant myth-busting
- Online harassment of dermatologists who correct misinformation
- Pressure to “perform” online to maintain credibility
- **Burnout risk** from digital misinformation fatigue and **clinician burnout**

THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL..

Trust in Dermatologists Versus Social Media Influencers Among Acne Patients

Zulal Inci Bal [1], Nermin Karaosmanoglu [2], Berkay Temel [3], Ozge Mine Orenay [2]

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 40357320 PMCID: PMC12068905 DOI: 10.7759/cureus.83930

Abstract

Introduction: Acne vulgaris (AV) is one of the most common skin disorders, particularly affecting young people and adolescents, who are also widespread users of social media.

Objectives: The objectives of this study are to understand why patients seek information about their acne from social media, their perspectives on dermatologists and social media influencers, and how social media sharing affects their views on dermatologists.

Methods: This cross-sectional study included 100 AV patients aged 18-45 who visited the dermatology outpatient clinic of Ankara Training and Research Hospital. Patients were asked to complete a 30-item survey titled "Examination of Acne Patients' Trust Levels in Social Media Influencers and Dermatologists". The survey was structured to collect data on patients' social media usage patterns, their sources of information regarding acne (including both dermatologists and social media), and the levels of trust they place in these sources. Descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test, and Chi-square tests were used for analysis, with $p<0.05$ considered significant.

Results:

- 95% used social media for information
- 81% had a *high level of trust* in their dermatologist
- 97% of participants said that they would **trust the dermatologist** if the information from the dermatologists and social media influencers were contradictory

Dermatologists' presence on social media is highly regarded and important, more than that of influencers, and important at least in the case of acne...

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- Misinformation disrupts more than skin — it disrupts trust.
- Aim to increase people's digital and health literacy.
- Assume patients have been exposed to social media content—
  ask what they've seen, and do it non-judgmentally.
- Combat misinformation with education – Instagram is a potentially
  popular platform.
- Aim for endorsement cues by starting conversations.

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THANK YOU
AND STAY PROACTIVE

Increasing awareness about misinformation and the importance of addressing these challenges in dermatology is vital for the safety of patients with Atopic dermatitis

Special thanks to the ISAD organizers