

Original Research Article

Effect Of Social Media On Patients' Perception Of Dental Aesthetics In Aurangabad

ABSTRACT:-

Aims: Social media is defined as the 'software that enables individuals and communities to gather, communicate, share & in some cases collaborate or play'. These include social networking sites such as Facebook, and micro blogging platforms such as Twitter, Snapchat & Instagram. Social media nowadays is called a social-cultural agent of change that uses information and affects the provider-patient interaction. It is considered a useful tool for the dentist and the patient. Objective of this study is to study the impact of social media on patient's perception for seeking Dental Aesthetic treatments in Aurangabad.

Material And Methods: A cross-sectional analytical study employed online survey of 145 randomly selected patients. The targeted age of participants ranged from 18 years and above. The study data were collected using a two-part questionnaire.

Results: One hundred forty five participants responded to this study through online forms. Most of the participants belonged to the age group of 26-35 years (n=87), followed by 18-25 years(n=53), 36-45years and >45years (n=3 & 0 respectively). The response of females was high(54.5%) when compared to males(45.5%). A lot of patients think that dentist should communicate with people through social media rather than conventional media(89.7%)

Conclusion: The impact of social media on patients in Aurangabad can be considered as high. Patients are influenced by social media applications and are seeking aesthetic treatment as an outcome. It is the responsibility of dentists to educate patients about the best treatment options.

Keywords: Social Media, Aesthetic Dental Treatment, Dentistry

INTRODUCTION:

Social media is a powerful tool that affects not only communication but also relationships among people. Social media nowadays is called a social-cultural agent of change that uses information and affects the provider-patient interaction. Social media has begun to spread across the medical field, and nowadays, patients take it as a source of information. It is considered a useful tool for the dentist and the patient [1].

The widespread availability of information online, and our easy ability to access and share this information through various mobile devices means that social media is changing how we communicate with each other. Social media is defined as the 'software that enables individuals and communities to gather, communicate, share and in some cases collaborate or play[2]. These include Social Networking Sites such as Facebook and micro blogging platforms such as Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram[3].

According to Burns, "social media refers to interactive technologies that enable humans to interact, collaborate, and connect"[4,5]. Hence, the power of social media and its effect on the esthetic dental treatment choices should not be underestimated. Many dentist neglect the use of social media in their clinics. They may neglect the thought of using social media to add a value to their dental marketing or it has an effect on patient's feedback, after the esthetic dental treatment[6].

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted with the help of online electronic questionnaires from July 2022 to September 2022 among patients seeking dental treatments in Aurangabad region. The questionnaire was distributed to patients seeking aesthetic dental treatment. The study sample consisted of 145 randomly selected patients. The inclusion criteria were patients who ranged from 18 to older than 45 years. Geriatric patients(over 60 years old) and paediatric patients (below 18 years old) were excluded. Human subject protection was taken into consideration by explaining the purpose and the procedure of the current study to participating patients.

The first part of the questionnaire was about the age, gender and occupation of the participants and in the second part various queries regarding the social media were asked.

The questionnaire was constructed on Google Forms (www.docs.google.com). The link to the questionnaire was posted on social media sites including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram etc. The study was started after the approval was obtained by the Institutional ethical committee. The questionnaire used was framed for the purpose of the study, and content validation was done by peer review. The questionnaire had 15 closed ended question on Google forms were circulated on social media platforms among the patients. The responses were compiled, computed and analysed. Microsoft excel was used for the same. Statistical analysis of the data was done using frequency and percentages.

RESULTS:

Table 1. Demographics of the study participant

		n	%
Gender	Male	66	45.5%
	Female	79	54.5%
Age	18-25	53	37.06%
	26-35	87	60.83%
	36-45	3	2.09%
	>45	0	0%
Occupation	Working	89	61.37%
	Non-Working	13	8.96%
	Students	43	29.65%

Table 2 shows the various opinions of the participants when they were asked different questions regarding social media. When asked whether they followed a dentist on social media, 101(69.7%) of them agreed that they in-fact followed the dentist on social media, 44(30.3%) of them opined that they did not.

Most of the participants(89.7%) agreed that dentists should communicate with people through social media rather than conventional media (TV, newspapers, magazine) whereas 10.3% gave a negative response.

When asked about the validity of the information on social media, 67.6% of them trusted it, 32.4% of them did not.

On enquiring whether their choice of dental clinic was influenced by its representation on social media, most of them (78.6%) agreed positively, 21.4% did not agree.

When asked would they choose a dental clinic or a dentist based on an advertisement by a celebrity on social media, (53.1%) of them agreed and (46.9%) of them opined that they did not.

When we assessed the satisfaction about the shape and colour of their natural teeth, 20.7% reported that they did not like them.

When asked are they confident in the appearance of their teeth while talking or smiling in photos , videos and public speaking or when close to other people , (82.1%) were confident and 17.9% said they are not.

101(69.7%) participants wish to have teeth like celebrities/ influencers on social media.

Among 145 participants 76(52.4%) would like to change the appearance/colour/placement of their teeth.

In our study majority (79.3%) of the participants were affected by their family or friend's dental treatment.

More than half of the participants (68.3%) responded positively when they were asked if social media was their first choice for information regarding an aesthetic dental treatment or clinic, not withstanding 31.7% who felt otherwise.

Before and after pictures of a dental treatment in social media was influential for 71.7% of the subjects but did not matter to 28.3% of respondents.

Furthermore the findings revealed that 63.4% of participants narrated their dental experiences on social media while 36.6% did not feel it was important.

78.6% participants said that they think aesthetic dental treatment is expensive and 21.4% think it is not.

Table2. Responses to the questions by the study participants

Questions	Responses(%) (n=155)
1.Do you have an account on any social media platform?	
Yes	140(96.6%)
No	5(3.4%)
2.Do you follow any dentist/dental clinic or pages related to dental treatments on social media?	
Yes	101(69.7%)
No	44(30.3%)
3.Do you think that dentists should communicate with people through social media rather than conventional media(TV, newspaper, magazine)?	
Yes	130(89.7%)
No	15(10.3%)
4.Do you trust the information you get from social media about dentistry and treatment options?	
Yes	98(67.6%)
No	47(32.4%)
5.Would you visit a dental clinic because you visited or read their page on social media sites?	
Yes	114(78.6%)
No	31(21.4%)
6.Would you choose a dental clinic or dentist based on an advertisement by a celebrity on social media?	
Yes	77(53.1%)
No	68(46.9%)
7.Do you like the shape / colour of your teeth?	
Yes	115(79.3%)
No	30(20.7%)
8.Are you confident in the appearance of your teeth while talking or smiling in photos, videos, and public speaking or when close to other people?	
Yes	119(82.1%)
No	26(17.9%)
9.Do wish to have teeth like celebrities/influencers on social media?	
Yes	101(69.7%)
No	44(30.3%)
10.Do you like to change the appearance/colour/placement of your teeth?	
Yes	76(52.4%)
No	69(47.6%)
11.If you saw on social media a friend or family member with a new smile, would you ask about the esthetic dentist or dental clinic they were treated in?	
Yes	115(79.3%)
No	30(20.7%)
12.If you want to get information about an esthetic dental treatment or clinic, is social media your first choice for information?	
Yes	99(68.3%)
No	46(31.7%)
13.Would you go to a dentist because you saw a before and after pictures in social media?	
Yes	104(71.7%)
No	41(28.3%)
14.Do you write about your visit to the dentist or dental clinic in social media?	
Yes	92(63.4%)
No	53(36.6%)
15.Do you think esthetic dental treatment is expensive?	
Yes	114(78.6%)
No	31(21.4%)

DISCUSSION:

Social media has become a very influential tool that affects our communication and relationships with people, and like every other tool, it has pros and cons. Social media nowadays is called a “social-cultural agent of change” that uses data to alter the provider-patient interaction. The use of social media in the medical field has grown exponentially and has become one of the main sources of information for the patient. In fact, it is considered a useful tool for the dentist and the patient; even though the patients use social media in their personal lives, we still do not know enough about their attitudes and what they expect from its interactions[7]. As far as the patients are concerned, there are many patients who are already using different social media to connect with their dentists. In our study, younger age groups were more frequent users of social media, and the majority was females, especially in the aesthetic field.

The present study was conducted to see the impact of social media on patient's perception in dental aesthetics. In the present study a total of 145 subjects participated and amongst them 79(54.5%) were females which is in agreement to the study conducted by Alnjadat et al[8]. In a survey, Hanna Krasnova et al. concluded that due to their emotional volatility, females use social media platforms more than males(they like to keep close ties and gain social information)[9].

In the present study 69.7% of participants were following a dentist or a dental clinic on social media which is in agreement with a study conducted by Awdah et al where 53.3% were following a dentist on social media[10].

Significant number of participants (89.7%) believed that the dentist should communicate with the people through social media which was in accordance to the study conducted by Thackeray et al where the participants appreciated the social media communication of health care providers[11]. The reason for such belief was due to the fact that there would be direct communication with the dentist and the information that is passed on is credible without filtration or manipulation.

Almost 68% of the participants trusted the information regarding a dentist or a dental clinic from social media. According to Hamm et al. a high percentage of people used internet as a source of information regarding health and it is the third most common activity on internet[12]. Another study conducted in 2013 by Pew Research Centre shows that 72% of adult internet users found online support for medical information[13]. The main reasons for using the internet were insufficient appointment time with physicians and obstacles to obtaining qualified health services. Convenience and coverage were considered to be the main advantage, while health information's credibility and trustworthiness may be the limitations.

Most of the participants in the present study (78.6%) visited the dentist's social media page which is in contrast to a study conducted by Parmar N et al where a total of 64% never searched their medical doctors and dentists on social media[14].

In present study 79.3% participants like their shape or colour of teeth which is in contrast with the study conducted by Khadijah M. Baik et al where only 29.8% participants like their natural teeth[15].

In our study majority (79.3%) of the participants were affected by their family or friend's dental treatment. This was in accordance with a study conducted by Fox S et al where 68% of all adults request health information from a friend or family member[13]. These findings were also in agreement with a study conducted by Parmar N et al. where, patients appreciated recommendations from friends and family, for dentist or a dental clinic[14].

In present study most of the participants (71.7%) were influenced with before and after treatment pictures and this finding was in agreement with a study conducted by Mir H where almost 58% participants were interested in before-and-after images [16].

In our study more than half of the participants (63.4%) write about their visit to the dentist or dental clinic in social media which is in contrast with the study conducted by Mir H where only 28.1% people write about their visit [16].

CONCLUSION:

The study confirmed that social media has recently become a priority in the Aurangabad population, and it developed very quickly. Patients are influenced by the social media applications and are seeking aesthetic treatment as an outcome. Therefore, It is the responsibility of dentists to educate patients about the best treatment options.

DATA AVAILABILITY: The data presented in this study are available within the article.

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UNDER PEER REVIEW