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Title

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Journal

Dermatology Online Journal, 23(7)

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Publication Date

2017

DOI

10.5070/D3237035731

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Dermatology on Snapchat

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Abstract

Launched in 2011, Snapchat is one of the newest social media platforms with over 158 million active daily users. This study investigated the presence of dermatology-related content on Snapchat. We searched for Snapchat accounts for the top ten most popular dermatology journals, professional dermatological organizations, and dermatology-related patient advocate groups on social media. None of the above-mentioned entities were found on Snapchat. Plastic surgeons were found to primarily utilize the application, although one prominent dermatologist was also found. It was theorized that the brevity of the “snaps” was a contributing factor for dermatological organizations to not use the application. However, Snapchat in the right practice setting may be useful for dermatologists, not only to educate followers, but also as a marketing tool to Millennials.

Keywords: Snapchat, dermatology, social media, dermatology journals, dermatology organizations, dermatology patient groups

Introduction

Snapchat is a novel social media platform that was developed in 2011. At release, its main feature was that pictures were “snaps” that were shared for up to 10 seconds before becoming automatically deleted. Since this time, the mobile application has grown to over 158 million active daily users [1] and offers a host of features including private photo and video sharing, instant messaging, video chat, and creation of public “stories.” Snapchatters watch over 10 billion videos

and spend an average of 25-30 minutes per day on the application [1]. In addition, other public content includes live streaming of events and publication of articles from prominent journals and magazines. Snapchat’s advent of public content, especially “stories,” has allowed users to develop massive followings in which their followers can watch their daily activities. Recently, healthcare providers have begun to not only use social media outlets to play a large role in educating patients, aspiring physicians, and colleagues, but also as a marketing tool for their practice targeted toward the Millennials actively using the application [3-11].

Plastic surgeons have been on the forefront of the healthcare Snapchat movement, with surgeons such as Michael Salzhauer, MD, (@therealdrmiami) and Matthew Schulman, MD, (@nycplasticsurg) receiving over 1 million views per snap [9-10].

Given the rise of healthcare providers using social media, this study aims to investigate the presence of dermatology providers, journals, professional dermatological organizations, and dermatology-related patient groups on Snapchat.

Methods

Data was collected by author RP on April 1, 2017. A second author, NK, confirmed methods and results on April 4, 2017. The top ten most popular dermatology journals, professional dermatological organizations, and dermatology-related patient advocate groups on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), catalogued in a previous study [12], were identified. Snapchat usernames were then searched via their official websites. A Google search of “Snapchat

Dermatology” and “Snapchat Dermatologist” was performed and the first page of results was also analyzed.

Results

After the search, no dermatological journal, professional dermatological organization, or dermatology-related patient advocate group had a Snapchat account. A google search of “Snapchat Dermatology” and “Snapchat Dermatologist” revealed none of the top organizations. The first results on both searches were articles about the most prominent physician users of Snapchat, with an overwhelming majority of these being plastic surgeons [9-11]. One dermatologist, Sandra Lee, MD, (@drpimplepopper), was featured in these articles, but her number of views per snap was not stated.

Conclusion

Our study concludes that dermatological organizations do not yet have a presence on Snapchat. One possible explanation is the 10 second duration of photos and videos. Although Snapchat “stories” can be replayed infinitely for up to 24 hours, the transient nature of Snapchat may be steering the majority of these organizations to more permanent methods of sharing media via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. In contrast, healthcare providers in other fields such as plastic surgery have successfully used Snapchat as an educational and marketing tool. We suggest that more dermatological organizations investigate the use of Snapchat in their practice, not only for educational purposes, but also as a marketing tool for Millennials that actively use the application on a daily basis.

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