

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DENTISTRY

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Abstract

Social media are part of the fabric of today's world, from which health care is not excluded. Based on its distribution capacity, a single individual can cause an amount of damage to an institution that only a few decades ago required access to a mainstream news media outlet. Despite the obvious parallels in professional standards in the medical and dental communities, the scholarly activity and resulting collegial discourse observed among medical professionals remain unmatched in the dental education literature. As a result, a rigorous research agenda on the topic is indicated. Once these results are evaluated and thoroughly vetted, actions should be tailored to address the needs, minimize the threats, and maximize the opportunities that have been already noted by the medical profession.

Keywords: *Social media, Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Pintrest, Dental tourism*

Introduction

Social media has become the part and parcel of our system. Social networks open up the possibilities of discovering and learning new information, sharing ideas and interacting with others. It has changed the way people interact and carry on with their everyday lives. Internet has become a necessity in every home and office, majority of the people spend most of their time on social media sites

Social media not only helps people stay in touch but also opens up the possibilities of discovering and learning new information, sharing ideas and interacting with others. In this article we are discussing about the influence of social media in dentistry.

In 2014, it was estimated that approximately 3 billion people used the internet. According to the Office for National Statistics, 36 million British adults have access to the internet every day and a further 53 % access the internet via mobile devices.¹ The widespread availability of information online, and easy ability to access and share the information through various mobile devices means that social media brings change in how we communicate with each other.

Effects Of Social Media On Dentistry

- Social media helps to make dental related information easily accessible to people.
- Now there are also facilities where patients can get online appointments. This can save their time.
- The social media such as Facebook, twitter, Googleplus, YouTube, and LinkedIn presents an extraordinary marketing opportunity for dentists who are looking to promote their independent practices. From the latest happenings in your dental practice, to photos, videos, and inspirational quotes that reflect your mission and vision.

- **Connect with your patients:** by having a social media page, patients are able to post questions and comments about your service. Dentist can also post dental health related articles, images and videos, these helps to promote awareness among patients.

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- Dentist can also improve the connectivity with other professionals in the industry. These could include leading dentist in any part of the world, potential business partners, marketing and PR experts.
 - Use of Online dental shops is also now increasing. Dentist can buy dental equipment, clinical materials, dental kits, dentistry related books. Here dentist can buy their products in bulk without much difficulty.
 - Many dental schools use social media to promote their course and communicate with their students. Dental educators also use YouTube and blogs to enhance the classroom learning experiences. Social media has also been used to promote new dental techniques(through uploaded videos on YouTube). Many practitioners have their own websites and Facebook pages through which they post ,practice hours, updates on health topics and testimonials from satisfied patients. Such online activities can be interpreted as a form of community service.
 - Facebook has become an integral platform for all individuals to connect, and an effective platform for business to reach new and existing clients. Sharing photos, events, and information through specially designed Facebook pages is easy and enormously productive. The additional benefit is that this channel also introduces your practice to prospective new patients through information delivered to them. Patients can also post their feedbacks, queries , in dentist pages. This helps to develop a good patient – dentist relation.
 - Nowadays there are various groups that are active in Facebook. This includes various dental college groups, dental students group, community for dentist, and also various dental pages that share newer thoughts and treatment plans. These help us to connect dental professionals from different parts of the world. People will also come across various new treatment methods.
 - There are also pages which provide information about dental vacancies in different places. Besides this it also provides a marketing opportunity for the dentist who is looking to promote their practices.

Youtube

Education in many disciplines has undergone a dramatic change with the incorporation of electronic means. YouTube is an open access online website that has gained tremendous popularity in recent years. It allows users to upload videos for social and educational purposes.

One can grasp more by seeing something. In this way YouTube helps students to understand something by seeing videos. That is the reason for its high popularity among dental students. Used as an adjunct tool to supplement dental education due to it being easily accessible online. It provides many sources of information that can be accessed by those working in or preparing for the dental profession, whether students or practitioners. Whether filming patient's testimonials , demonstration of a treatment or just a simple office tour, dental practices are harnessing the marketing power of YouTube. When patients enjoy your content, they share it with their friends and families on their own personal social networks.

Online Shopping Sites- My Dentist choice

It is the biggest shopping app for dental products and dental equipments. It brings the comfort of shopping online for all dental needs including dental materials, equipment and instruments. It has features that will make easy to browse and purchase of various brand products anytime and anywhere. It has more than 80 brands and more than 6000 products to choose from.²

It is an online dental store founded and managed by dentists. The Dentist Can shop anything from haematoxylin pencil to x-ray machine. Dent Kart offers a complete selection of goods from manufacturers like 3M Espe, Dentsply , Coltene, Ivocar Vivodent and Crest oral-B to name a few. Dent Kart offers a friendly customer service by email and phone. Can obtain great savings by buying top products in bulk

Twitter

Twitter is widely regarded as a powerful marketing tool, used to share quick and focused updates, connect with patients, learn from customers past experiences and connect with professional colleagues. Maintaining a twitter presence is fairly easy. It is much more convenient to tweet a message in seconds than to use a time consuming

media platform. Your dental office can reach out to millions of potential patients in a matter of few clicks. Various post related to oral diseases, dental hygiene, treatment modalities can be easily reached to community³

In order to optimize the benefits of twitter it is important to:

- Post often with relevant information to patients.
- Monitor your newsfeed for interesting stories that relate to the field of dentistry.
- Even if it is not related to a dental practice, if its interesting and relevant to patients, tweet it!
- Remember key words, site links, and intriguing contents are the key ingredients of great tweets.
- Follow as many dentistry related accounts as you can find. That includes other dentist offices, dental associations, dental bloggers, dental specialty fields and dental product manufactures.

Pinterest

- Pinterest is a pin board or bookmark style, photo sharing site. Users create theme based image collections that include favorite events, hobbies, interests and more. It is interactive; users can browse other boards, repin images to their boards or like images. For e.g.: your dental practice may pin items such as “Teeth whitening techniques” or “Foods you can eat while in braces”. If they agree, using your patient’s before and after dental photos can create valuable contents on Pinterest. Pinterest drives more referral traffic on the web than Google +, YouTube, Reddit.⁴

Newer Advances

Dental Tourism

Dental tourism means travelling abroad for affordable dental care, dental treatment, dental surgery or dental procedure which are generally expensive in one’s own country.

Dental tourism which is also known as ‘Tooth Tourism’ or ‘Dental Travel’ is not a recent concept. Americans have been going across the border to Mexico for decades for bargain deals on dental prosthetics, affordable dental implants and discount on dental crowns. It’s also not uncommon to see American tourists hunting for cheap cosmetic dentistry at dental offices in Panama or dental clinics in Costa Rica. Apart from this, India is one of an emerging destination for dental tourism. Online medias has now made the concept of dental tourism much easier. People can search online for affordable dental tourism worldwide and also can contact dental offices abroad.⁵

Through sophisticated online quote system, dental and medical records of the patients from abroad can also be made accessible.

Online Consultations

Nowadays various dental clinics offers ‘online consultation’ which provide an opportunity for patients to consult expert professionals from different parts of the world. Patients can create an account online, make a dental appointment online and make payments. There is also a new system ‘Patient Portal For Dental Patients’. It creates a personal account for each patient which enables them to access their dental records from anywhere in the world

Limitations Of Social Media

- Patients may be uncertain about the authenticity of the information and credibility of dentist.
- Access to social media may not be available to all sectors of society.
- Consent and legal issues: online discussion between patients and health care professionals can introduce legal complexities and lawsuits especially if inappropriate comments are made.

Conclusion

- The world has now turned to a small village with the help of social media. The above mentioned online activities can be interpreted as a form of community service. Increased availability of professional people

on line also has the effect of reducing the social distance that traditionally separated health care professionals from public.

- Dentists can enhance their social media networking by providing unique, relevant, and highly useful nuggets of information to their readers regularly. Dentists who have not yet woken up to the power of social media must realize that it is not just a tool for business, but it is also a good tool for building relationships. Social networks offer dentists the potential to reach out to the widest possible number of new patients at the lowest marketing cost per patient.
- Thus by effective use of social media, dentist can also contribute to promote the dental hygiene of our society.

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