



Journal Homepage: -www.journalijar.com

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/16286
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/16286>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATING AND IMPROVING THE ORAL HEALTH STATUS IN CHILDREN

Dr. Ketki Kashyap, Dr. Shivani Mathur, Dr. Manvi Malik and Dr. Kopal Singh

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 15 December 2022

Final Accepted: 19 January 2023

Published: February 2023

Abstract

Social media is an integral part of the communal fabric of today's world, from which health care is not excluded. Communication plays a vital role in breaking down barriers between the patient and dental health professional, and in strengthening the treatment alliance. It is increasingly becoming popular as a useful tool for health care providers to motivate and encourage patients of all ages groups and social backgrounds.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2023,. All rights reserved.

Introduction:-

“ The future promise of any nation can be directly measured by the present prospects of its youth.”

In the 2020's we have come a far way from letters and postcards to the times of instant gratification with one click. Social media has become vital in the lives of individuals of all ages and walks of life. It has not only facilitated instant communication between one part of the world to another, but also brought the world right at our doorstep.



Figure 1:-

According to the Global social media statistics research summary 2022, 4.70 billion people around the world use social media with the average daily time spent using social media being 2 hours 29 mins. (Figure 1) The Indian social media statistics 2019, indicate that due to ever increasing ease of accessibility, the number of active users of social media in 2019 were estimated to be around 330 million and are expected to reach 448 million by 2023. ⁽¹⁾

Today, Social networking giants like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn etc not only act as portals for communication but have also become an integral part of day to day life both on the personal and professional front. The influence of these platforms is being heavily explored by a variety of professions including the health care sector.

Despite constant efforts through oral health awareness programmes, there is a scarcity of provision of proper oral health care in our country. In 2018, The national health profile consensus revealed that 2.7 Lakh dentists were registered with the Dental Council of India, with 1:5000 dentists in Urban areas and 1:50,000 dentists in rural areas. This uneven distribution of oral health care providers emphasises the importance of social media in promoting oral health care even in the remotest of places.

Benefits of Social Media :

1. For seeking health-related information which includes seeking information on a disease, treatment and/or medicines.
2. Social networking sites have conquered the major issue of : Accessibility. They proved to be extremely beneficial during the times of pandemic when a person in need could obtain medical or dental consultation online sitting in the comforts of their home at their convenience.
3. Electronic communication has the potential to deliver health care messages to large population groups and in the remotest of areas
4. Various social media platforms allow Health care providers to increase oral health literacy in an interactive manner and thus improve health outcomes.⁽⁴⁾
5. It provides a personalised experience to the patient which instils camaraderie between the patient and dental health professional, thereby strengthening treatment alliance and enhancing patient compliance.
6. Social Media has successfully broken barriers between various aspects of society, reaching far & wide, to rich and poor, old and young people, national and internationally. (Figure 2)



Figure 2:-

Social Media : A Game Changer in Pediatric Dentistry –



Figure 3:-

In Today's fast paced advancing world, children right from the beginning are exposed to and familiar with social media. These days children and adolescents are naturally more receptive to videos and pictures that they come across online which greatly influences their cognition, behaviour and attitude. One on one interaction of Pediatric dentists via various social media platforms can help gain attention, emphasise oral health importance, promote check ups and healthy oral hygiene habits to a wide range of audience of different age groups specially children. (Figure 3)



Figure 4:-

Empowering Parents : Prenatal Counselling-

We can utilise the various social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and Facebook to form Groups of expectant parents and broadcast essential information pertaining to various aspects of Prenatal diet and dental counselling. (Figure 4) This can be instrumental in providing them with all the relevant information required as part of anticipatory guidance. It would also help in proactively addressing the physical, emotional, psychological and developmental changes that will occur in children between successive visits and might potentially instil a positive dental attitude in the child as well as parents.

Befriending the Doctor : Pre-Treatment Familiarization-

In most urban cities, children come from nuclear families with working parents. Online consultation and interactive sessions prove to be a boon in such situations wherein a child can be acquainted with the dental set up and personnel right from the comforts of their home without requiring multiple familiarization visits.⁽²⁾



Figure 5:-

These interactive sessions not only help in adding a personal touch but can be specially beneficial since information presented through these sites is presented in an attractive manner with colourful imagery and music to gain the attention of the children.(Figure 5)

Bahabri RHet al in 2021 conducted an online survey to assess the impact of using social media on dental treatments and concluded that a significant number of participants (83.9%) believed that the dentist should communicate with the people through social media as it improves trust and enhances communication. ⁽³⁾

Thus can be safely assumed that today, a young person with high self-esteem and good social skills, one who has access to relevant information is likely to make positive decisions about health and therefore, this platform can also be used as a tool of reinforcement and for advancing awareness.

You can do it too!:: Video Modelling –

We can easily perform pre-treatment behaviour modification prior to the actual appointment with the help of video modelling, wherein, the patient can observe perhaps from the comforts of his home, the treatment being provided to the model.

Alnamankany A et al in 2019 conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of video modelling in pre-procedural behaviour modification and concluded that Video modelling seemed to be an effective method in reducing dental anxiety in children receiving pit and fissure sealants. ⁽⁵⁾

This might be helpful in saving upon unnecessary extra visits and valuable clinical time of the Pediatric dentist which is utilised for pre-treatment behaviour management of the patient. It also helps in saving the parents' valuable time and provides a comfortable alternative.



Figure 6:-

Reel or Real : Virtual Reality –

Virtual Reality Distraction is one of the most upcoming and interesting behaviour modification techniques which can magically transport the child into a dental set up or a scenery of their choice. This can be a major asset for managing the anxiety and behaviour of today's "tech-savvy" children. (Figure 6)

This is supported by the study conducted by Gomez-polo C et al in 2021 who evaluated the effectiveness of using a VR headset as a distraction for managing the anxiety and behaviour of paediatric patients during their dental treatment and concluded that the use of a VR headset during dental treatment significantly reduced anxiety (95% of the children were happy) and improved behaviour (100% positive behaviour) as compared with the control group.⁽⁶⁾

Newest Trends in Social Media -

In the recent years, social networking sites have greatly received the attention of health practitioners and researchers, as well as health centres. It has become a reliable tool in public interactions through questionnaires about health research and has become an essential means of spreading health awareness among members of society. Their massive popularity has also contributed, to these sites being involved in marketing of health services provided by various health facilities and private dental clinics.



Figure 7:-

The newest trends on networking sites include the following :

1. Detailed YouTube videos and vlogs are formulated and shared by dentists on various dental problems and their treatments.
2. Oral health related information can also be seen transmitted through user friendly and acceptable immersive videos called Reels and Shorts in which the information is creatively expressed to educate the audience accompanied by music and graphics. (Figure 7)
3. Dedicated pages on Instagram and Facebook regularly post educational content pertaining to different procedures and newer treatment options.
4. One-on-one at home personalised online consultations are provided by the dentists to the patients through various applications like Practo by certified physicians.
5. Facilitating referrals between health care workers of different specialities has become all the more easy in order to provide comprehensive health care to the patient.
6. These sites are also used for marketing and advertising various dental set ups and for broadcasting treatment outcomes to encourage patients

Keeping in the mind the wonders of social media, we must not forget the perils that come along with it. We must be careful about the fact that:

Social Media :

A double edged Sword !!

Challenges with Social Media :

1. Social media has become so popular, almost too popular to the point where today's generation is consumed by it.
2. The accessibility and ease of transmitting data has given rise to circulation of a multitude of false information regarding dental treatments and practices which at times becomes successful in brainwashing patients.
3. As Health care providers it becomes our utmost responsibility to protect our patient's information and interests which might be jeopardised by posting about them in social media.

Conclusion:-

“ Our future success is directly proportional to our ability to understand, adopt and integrate new technology into work.” – Author Sukant Ratnakar

Therefore today, the patient adherence to prevention and treatment regimens and patient outcomes are crucially linked to provider-patient communication. Health care providers can increase oral health literacy and improve health outcomes by providing current knowledge and skills for their patients in a manner that enhances understanding and appropriate use of such information.

References:-

1. Subburaman N, Parangimalai DM, Iyer K, Sukumaran A. Effectiveness of social media based oral health promotion programme among 18-20 year old city college students-A comparative study. *Ind Jour of Dent Res.* 2021 Oct 1;32(4):467.
2. Althunayan A, Alsalhi R, Elmoazen R. Role of social media in dental health promotion and behavior change in Qassim province, Saudi Arabia. *Int Jour of Med & Heal Res.* 2018;4(2):98-103.
3. Bahabri RH, Zaidan AB. The impact of social media on dental practice promotion and professionalism amongst general dental practitioners and specialists in KSA. *Jour of Tai Univ Medi Sci.* 2021 Jun 1;16(3):456-60.
4. Alalawi A, Aljuaid H, Natto ZS. The effect of social media on the choice of dental patients: a cross-sectional study in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. *Pat pre and adher.* 2019;13:1685.
5. Alnamankany A. Video modelling and dental anxiety in children. A randomised clinical trial. *Eurjourofpaed dent.* 2019 Sep 1;20(3):242-6.
6. Gómez-Polo C, Vilches AA, Ribas D, Castaño-Séiquer A, Montero J. Behaviour and anxiety management of paediatric dental patients through virtual reality: A randomised clinical trial. *Jour of clin med.* 2021 Jul 7;10(14):3019.