



RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIAL MEDIA - A MAGIC WAND TO REACH PEDIATRIC TO GEDIATRIC POPULATION

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Abstract

In the current era, social media is considered as an emerging platform which connects people worldwide. In this emerging world of science and technology, social media is a boon to pass information to a larger group of population within fraction of seconds. Even the field of medical and dental science does not remain untouched by reformed social media.

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Introduction:-

“SocialMediaisnotamedia.Thekeyistolisten,engageandbuildrelationships.”

---DavidAlston

Sustainable development is the pathway to the future and Social media is not anexceptiontoit.Itisanemerging source ofplatformwhichisbeingusedatitsmaximuminsomeorotherformbyalmosteveryindividual,irrespectiveoftheirageandgender.Ithelpstoconnectpeopleina shortspan of time worldwide.

There are millions of users of various social media platforms, such as facebook,Instagram, twitter,etc and hence the medical and dental care sectors can very well utilize theseenormousplatformsofsocialmediatopromotetheimportanceofsystemicandoralhealthglobally.Withthenovelinventionofsmartphones,datasuggests that the usage smartphones in India alone has drastically increased from468million in2017to859million in2022,a total surge of84%.^[1]

Achangeinscenarioinhealthcaresector:Offline To Online

TheemergenceofglobalpandemicCOVIDmadetheworldrealizetheimportanceofsocialmediaatitsbest.Theonlymeanstocconnectwiththeachotherwasthroughvariousplatformsofsocialmedia

In fact, the online mode of health consultation came into utility at its maximum duringthis outbreak of pandemic. A new configuration of relationship was established, withthehelpofsocialmediabetweenpatientanddoctor.Inaddition,socialmedianotonlyconnects doctor to patients but also connects dentist to dentist, which can reform thelineoftreatment.

A survey from Practo, an Indian health-tech company, recently estimated that therewas a 32% drop in in-person appointments and a massive 300% growth in onlinemedicalconsultationsbetweenMarchand November2020.

Social media has even reached the village today. It has crossed boundaries of rich & poor, urban or rural. Hence it can be well utilised by dental health care professionals to educate and promote the importance of oral health by delivering health talks, demonstrations and guidelines to all the strata of society.

However, the universal coverage of social media regarding oral health is limited. Various organisations of dentists should connect online to general population and create awareness about basic oral health and also tell about the latest advancements available in dental treatment.

A survey conducted by Althuniyan A, 2018 evaluated the role of social media in dental health in Saudi Arabia. It was found that about 71% of population use social media as a platform to seek information regarding oral health.

Demographic Distribution of social media in India

With an enormous exploding population of 1.40 billion, India is one of the most populated countries and ranks 2nd in the world after China. Since, it's a developing country, the healthcare system needs special attention. Social media has become an easy access for such densely populated developing countries.

Data gathered by "Digital 2022: India" clearly depicts that the current scenario of internet usage has drastically increased by 34 millions between 2021 to 2022, which suggests that the motto of "Digital India" is its accomplishment.

The demographic distribution of current population of India is according to Digital 2022: India is depicted in fig. 1

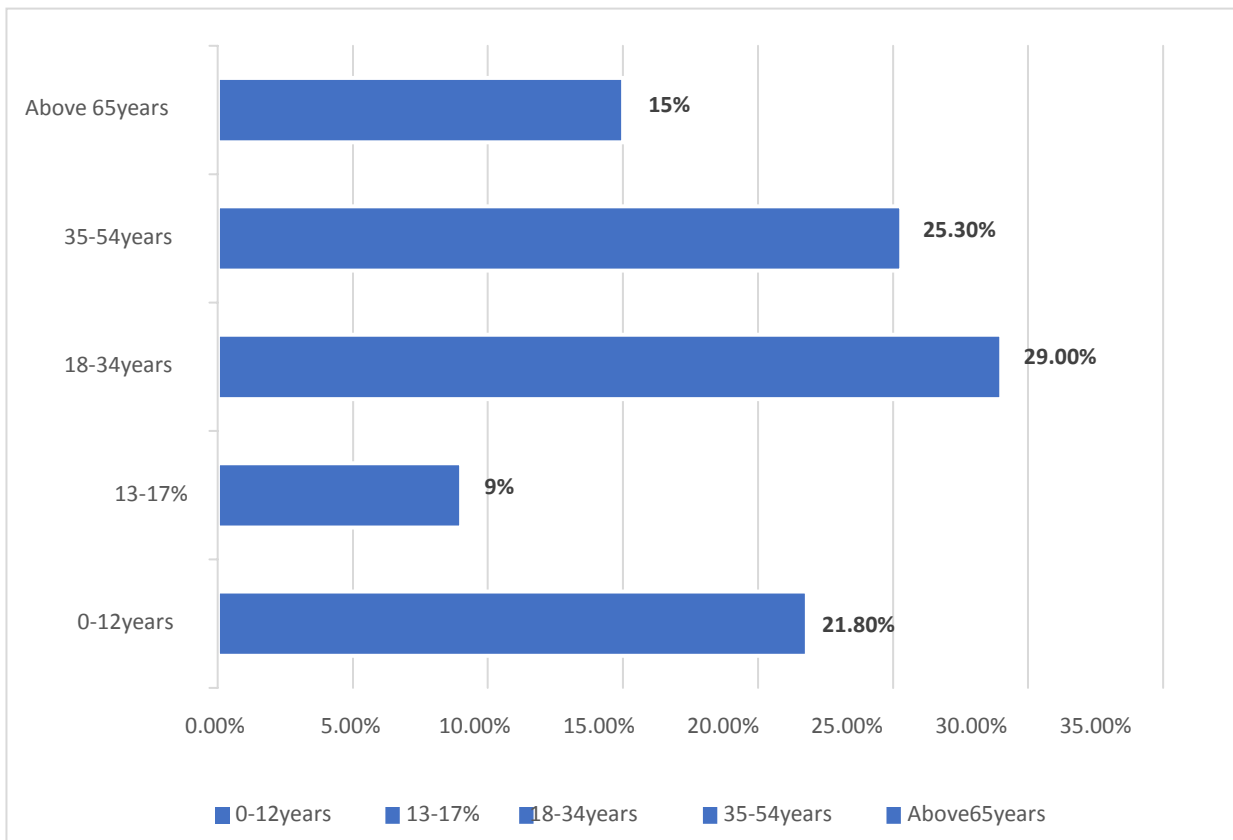


Figure 1:- Demographic distribution of population age wise.

Keopios analysis suggests that around 467 million population of India use various platforms of social media and the statistics of various social networking platforms according to Digital 2022: India is depicted in fig 2.

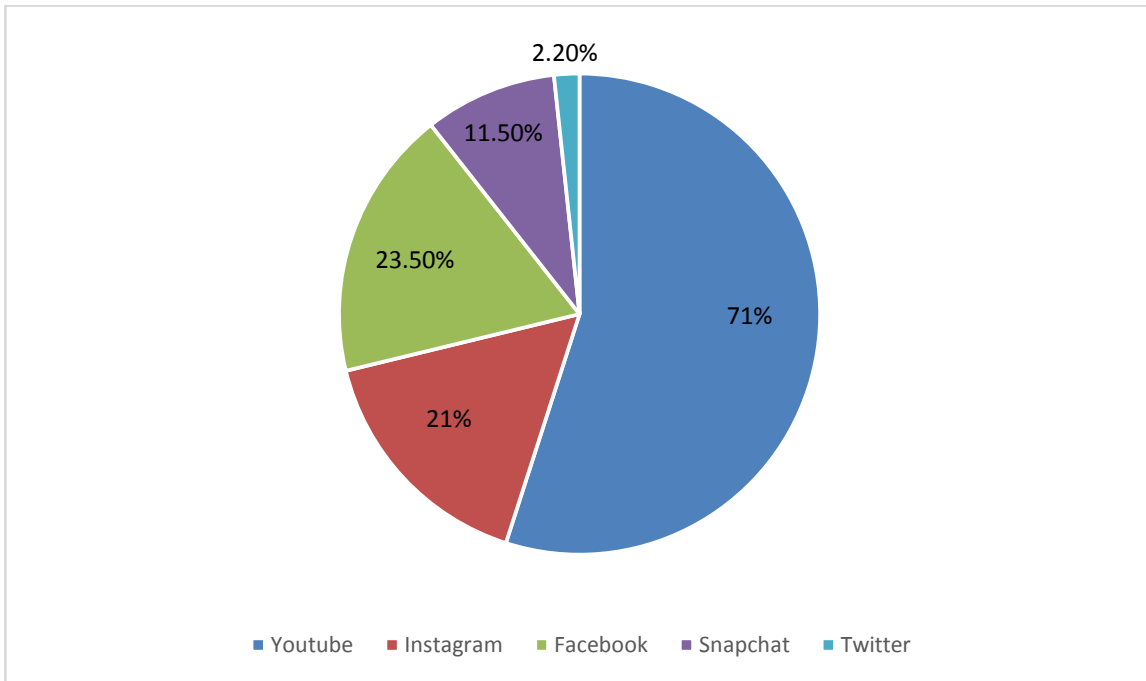


Figure2:- Socialmedia statisticsforIndiain2022.

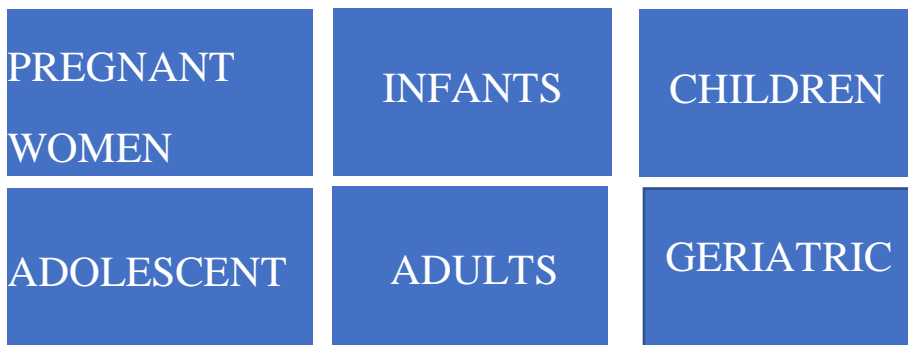
Redflag--Dentist :Population Ratioin India

World Health Organisation in 2022 stated that in India ,the dentist to population ratiois 1.6:10000,which is not enough to provide oral health service to each and every individual. So,theimportanceof social mediacomesintoconsiderationinsuchanodddentistpopulationratio.Theknowledgeofdentalhealthacrossdevelopingandun derdeveloped nations is still under infancy .Hence ,it is the responsibility of everydentist to make people aware that systemic and oral health are interrelated. Socialmedia is one such platform which can be a game changer to enhance patients’education focusing onmotivation in the form of health videos and health talk throughvariousplatforms.

Also,pediatricdentistsincollaborationwithpediatricians,gyneacologists,shouldstartcounsellingabouttheimportanceofa lhealthatanearllystageofpregnancyanditsassociation withantenatal and postnatal health of children through various modes ofsocial media apart from physical mode. Multimedia has emerged as a boon as it canbe utilized inhealthcaresectorsintheformofmessageservice,voicemessagesformatted text,photographs,drawings, graphics,animations,powerpointpresentations,audiosamples and videoclips.

Socialmedia :A boon foreveryone!!

Since,socialmediaisbeingenormouslyusedbyvariousstrataofpopulation.So,itcanbe usedas an valuabletooltopromoteoral healthinaneffective way.



Social media its role during pregnancy:

Pregnancy is a beautiful phase of every woman, it holds dreams of their future child and their well being. So, various antenatal informations can be easily accessed through apps specially designed for such women. Health-e babies which

illustrates fetal development, maternal physical changes, explanation of the tests and procedures they may undergo and problems they may experience during their pregnancy with advice on what to do and where to seek help if needed. It promotes healthy eating, exercise and relaxation during pregnancy with scientifically based information with particular emphasis on relieving anxiety and depression along with nearby access to hospitals.^[3]

Role of social media during infancy:

We all know that oral health is the key to success for the general well being of an individual. So, the importance of oral health can be incorporated right from the sapling stage of life of a human being, referred to as infancy.

The correct balance of taste and texture of food is essential to cater the nutritional needs of a growing infant.

Across the developing countries with high population growth rate and low per capita income, triple burden of malnutrition such as undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency and overnutrition are becoming a major issue of concern.

So, organizations such as UNICEF, WHO recommends initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, with the addition of nutritiously appropriate complementary feeds at 6 months with continued breastfeeding at least until 2 years of age.^[4]

According to reports of National Family Health Survey 4, only 42% of Indian newborns are fed with breast milk within 1 hour of birth and only 55% of children under 6 months of age are exclusively breastfed, as recommended.^[4] So, the data suggest that a huge population of mothers are not aware of the importance of breastfeeding which may lead to disastrous effect on the infants in the form of malnutrition and on his/her overall development.

Majority of the general population are not aware that the care of dentition starts right with the eruption of first primary tooth. Hence, such small packets of information can be sent with the help of Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc.

“Creating a little awareness can bring a sparkling smile in future”.

Role of social media during childhood:

Children are the foundation stone of society. Thus, an early education regarding oral health can minimize the prevalence of dental caries and other dental related problems.

It is well said that “Prevention is better than cure”. So, hold true in terms of oral health of an individual.

Children can be very easily moulded at an early stage of life and social media can be one of the approaches to inculcate the correct measures of oral health. Various apps have come into play for this. The correct brushing techniques, diet counselling, etc based on cognitive ability of the child.

Various apps are available online which can educate children about oral hygiene habits in a fun mode such as Brush DJ, Disney Magic Timer, Tiny Dentist, ChomperChum, etc.

Several studies have been conducted in past in order to see the impact of social media on oral health of children and significant results have been obtained.

A survey conducted on usage of smartphones and its utility in oral health care has given the data about 612 apps are available related to oral health system.^[3] Various apps are being used by general population in order to keep themselves in a healthy state of wellbeing.

Similarly, a study conducted by Shirmohammadi M et al 2022 assessed the impact of smartphone application usage by mothers in improving oral health of their children. A significant improvement in modified plaque index and modified gingival index was seen in 51 children after the smartphone application.^[5]

Another study was conducted by Zolfagri M et al 2021, based on the concept of gamification. In this, 58 mother and child pair were included and were randomly divided into simple app and gamified app. These apps consisted of information about early childhood caries, health diet, sugars, baby-oral hygiene, fluoride effect, fluoride toothpaste, tooth-brushing training video and regular dental visits. It was seen that after 1 month, both apps effectively improved the oral-health knowledge and practice of mothers. Also, plaque control was superior in children of mothers using the gamified app. [2]

Al-Saffan et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive oral health education program using videos to assess the improvement in children's knowledge. Findings suggested a significantly better level of knowledge after the educational program [6]

Hence, it can be concluded that Mobile health (mHealth) apps promote healthy lifestyles by enabling people to better manage their healthcare and wellbeing, and to access relevant information at any time and place.

Importance of social media during adolescence:

According to UNICEF (2022), India has the largest adolescent population in the world, 253 million, and every fifth person is between 10 to 19 years.

The use of internet as a source of health information has increased considerably in recent years, particularly among younger adults and children. Internet and social media have the potential to help in promoting positive health behaviours and change modifiable risk factors. Social media and mobile applications have been used successfully to deliver interventions aimed at weight loss, smoking cessation and reduce alcohol consumption, among others. Similarly, internet-based interventions used as oral health promotion tools, have demonstrated their usefulness in improving oral hygiene, increasing dental knowledge in maternal caries transmission, improving adherence to orthodontic treatment and managing dental anxiety.

Social media & its role in adults:

There are more than 4 billion web pages containing health information published on the internet. Research has shown that up to 75% of people worldwide use the internet to access health information.

Due to lack of time and knowledge about oral health, adult population seek information from internet which are at potential risk of deriving wrong information. So, the imperative role of oral health care professionals play an essential role to fight against "health misinformation". There are various apps available such as The Health On the Net (HON) Foundation and the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission's (URAC) Health Website Accreditation Program which verifies the credibility of web related health information [7]. So, it is our duty as a responsible dentist to guide the general population to prevent them from seeking irrelevantly wrong information from internet.

A pro active participation from both dentist and adult population can promote healthy smile .

Importance of social media in geriatric population:



According to the Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036, there are nearly 138 million elderly persons in India in 2021 (67 million males and 71 million females) and is further expected to

increase by around 56 million elderly persons in 2031. Such an enormous figure of elderly population requires utmost care and attention as geriatric population are most vulnerable to various age related chronic illness.

General health and life quality of elderly people are extensively affected by the oral and dental hygiene. Lack of knowledge in elderly people leads to lower priority to their oral and dental hygiene which influences the life quality and general health matter. So, this gap of knowledge can be filled by various social awareness platforms by creating awareness about that quality of life expectancy depends on quality of oral health.

Last but not the least, every strata of population is aware about various platforms of social media. So, let's join hands and create a healthy smile by promoting oral health awareness through social media.

Conclusion:-

Social media is an emerging platform and we as pediatric dentists can take full advantage of it and contribute in building a health nation by motivating, educating both children and parents about the importance of general and oral health. Also, health-promoting messages coming from social networks instead of experts are more impactful on today's generation.

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