

## Social media: A double-edged sword?

#JawSurgery: Analysis of social media use in orthognathic surgery patients  
*Br Dent J* 2018; **224**: 635-638 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/sj.bdj.2018.266>



to each patient to evaluate if there should be more invested in social media to support this patient group. They were mainly teenagers and young adults – an age group where use of social network sites (SNS) is comparably higher than others.

An analysis of 47 valid responses showed that 94% of patients were always or very likely to use the internet for health information, which was the highest compared to other options. While internet usage as a source of information was the most popular option, nearly half (49%) of responders have also browsed SNS in relation to their orthognathic treatment.

The survey also revealed that 87% of responders reported that using social media reduced anxiety with treatment. Multiple studies reflect agreement with this, as patients can reach out and interact with those having similar experiences, thoughts and feelings.

Eighty-nine percent of patients reported trusting information from medical professionals online, while 56% trusted those of general users. Information online is mostly unverified, making it possibly inaccurate and misleading. It is essential that patients are discerning while reading non-professional websites and advice from unqualified individuals online.

Ultimately, it is evident that younger patients prefer interactive sites over static sites where information is shared in a one-way manner. Ideally, health boards could produce administered social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with an element of interactivity that these patients seek in order to allow them to share experiences with each other.

Social media can indeed be a double-edged sword for the healthcare industry but it is a trend that is unlikely to die down. From this study, it can be seen that patients are shying away from leaflets, preferring social media instead to obtain information. Nevertheless, it is important that more studies are conducted into this matter, such as on the use of blogs or the quality of social media postings online.

By Helena Condotta

The increasing prevalence of social media in the last decade combined with the fact that 5% of all Google searches were health related, means it may be more likely that individuals consult 'Dr Google' for their symptoms before picking up their phone to ring their GMP or GDP.

To investigate this phenomenon, authors Olivia Coleman and colleagues studied a group of 51 orthognathic surgery patients at Bristol Dental Hospital to find out how they used social media to obtain health-related information related to their treatment. A questionnaire was given

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