

Patient Perceptions of Orthopaedic Sports Medicine Surgeons on Social Media

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INTRODUCTION: Healthcare provider presence on social media is growing across all platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Prior studies in non-orthopaedic specialties have shown that engagement through social media is important for patient communication and education. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the influence of social media among sports medicine patients, including their preferred content, to guide surgeon utilization of platforms.

METHODS: An anonymous online, voluntary, self-administered questionnaire containing 13 questions was distributed to patients (n=159) who had a clinic visit with one of two orthopaedic sports medicine surgeons at the same institution between November 2021 and January 2022. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS: A total of 159 responses were received for a response rate of 29.5%. The most popular social media platforms used by these patients were Facebook (37.4%, n=110), YouTube (17.1%, n=69), and Instagram (13.8%, n=61). Patients reported highest content preference in medical facts (16.8%, n=78) followed by educational videos (15.5%, n=72) (Figure 1). Forty-six (28.9%) patients preferred to familiarize themselves with a physician on social media before an appointment, although 63 (39.6%) patients reported that they do not have that preference, and fifty patients (31.5%) noted that they have no preference.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: Patients frequently use the internet to find answers to their health care questions. In this study, we found that sports medicine patients prefer to see educational resources from their surgeons on social media, most predominantly on Facebook. Sports medicine surgeons should consider being active on social media to utilize these popular platforms as both a marketing tool and a means to increase patient education about sports medicine injuries and recovery.

