

Educating Through Engagement: Instagram as a Tool for Dermatology Advocacy

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media has dramatically transformed how consumers access skincare information, with dermatology influencers and brands leveraging platforms like Instagram to share tips, products, and advice. However, this proliferation of content is not always shared by credible sources or is entirely accurate. In addition, the majority of top dermatology-related posts on Instagram are created by individuals without formal dermatology training, while board-certified dermatologists contribute only a small fraction.¹

This research aims to analyze the engagement metrics of dermatology-related Instagram accounts, focusing on the effectiveness of expert dermatologists and dermatological societies in combating misinformation shared by influencers.

This study analyzed Instagram accounts associated with dermatology content, including board-certified dermatologists, skincare influencers, and dermatology organizations. Data were collected using InstaTrack, a social media analytics tool, to systematically evaluate engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and follower growth. Inclusion criteria for accounts included accounts that must post dermatology or skin care-related content, dermatologist accounts with verified credentials, official dermatology organizations, active accounts that post regularly (at least once a week), and influencers with at least 50,000 followers. Accounts that do not post in English and private accounts were not included.

Preliminary findings suggest that dermatology organizations achieved higher growth rates, suggesting increasing interest in niche communities and advocacy content. Posts that connect education with entertainment were consistently among the most engaging across all account types, including posts that used trending audio. These findings suggest that dermatologists and organizations can optimize their social media presence by leveraging trends, emphasizing visually engaging educational content, and fostering community interaction.

This study highlights the significant role that dermatologists and dermatology organizations play in disseminating accurate skincare information on social media, despite comprising a small amount of Instagram accounts with popular dermatology content.² While skincare influencers frequently achieve higher visibility, their content may perpetuate misinformation and can often include sponsored posts. In contrast, expert-driven content, particularly myth-busting and educational posts, resonates strongly with targeted audiences, demonstrating the potential for impactful public education. These findings underscore the importance of optimizing social media strategies, such as incorporating trends, using relatable humor, and fostering community engagement to combat misinformation and broaden the reach of evidence-based dermatological education. A study done on dermatology patients found that 82.4% of them have used the internet or social media to gain medical information, highlighting the need for accurate content in this space to prevent misinformation.³ By aligning content creation with audience preferences, dermatologists and organizations can more effectively navigate the dynamic social media landscape and contribute to improving public skincare knowledge.

DISCLOSURES

The authors have no conflicts to disclose.

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