Social Media: Everyone has an opinion but where is the evidence?

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Background

Dentists and dental care professionals (DCPs) use social media for personal and professional purposes.

Uses of Social Media by Dentists and DCPs
- Education
- Networking
- Problem solving (clinical and non-clinical)
- Peer Support
- Advertising

It is important that students and qualified dentists/DCPs learn how to use it appropriately.

Aim: The aim was to carry out a scoping review mapping out the current state of the literature about the use of social media by dentists and DCPs. The Arksey and O’Malley framework was used to carry out this scoping review.⁴

Stage 1: Identify the question

What literature is available regarding dentists/DCPs use of social media?

Stage 2: Identify the relevant studies

PubMed was searched using the MeSH terms Health Personnel AND Internet. Search criteria are shown below.

Exclusion criteria
- not available in English
- articles published before 2000
- using social media and the internet as a survey tool

Inclusion criteria
- dentists/DCPs as the study sample
- about social media

Stage 3: Study Selection

Search Health Personnel AND Internet - 4428 articles

- Excluded published before 2000 - 4215 articles remaining
- Excluded due to other exclusion criteria - 724 articles remaining
- Excluded if not about Dentists/DCPs - 39 articles remaining

Stage 4: Charting the Data

The graph shows the number of opinion papers (n= 30; 77%) compared with research papers (n = 9; 23%).

Stage 5: Collating, Summarising and Reporting the Results

- None of the article incorporated the views of other stakeholders e.g. patients
- There is a large number of opinion articles compared with the volume of research papers
- All of the opinion papers attempted to educate dentists/DCPs on how to use social media.

Conclusions

To be able to educate dentists, DCPs and students, further research in required on how dentists and DCPs should use social media appropriately. This should include the views of patients and other stakeholder groups.

Table: Characteristics of the 9 research articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year Published</th>
<th>Study Population</th>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kothari et al⁵</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Members of the American Academy of Paediatric Dentists</td>
<td>General Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalez and Gadbury-Amoyet⁶</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Dental Students</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatoo et al⁷</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Dental Students and Faculty members</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry and Pieren⁸</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Dental Hygiene Directors</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayman and Visser⁹</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Members of the South African Dental Association</td>
<td>General Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnett et al¹⁰</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Dental School Faculty Members</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson¹¹</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Dental Hygiene students</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knösel et al¹²</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>YouTube videos related to dentistry</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wemore et al¹³</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1st year BSc in Dental Hygiene Students</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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References: