

**Title:** Patient Perceptions of Social Media Use by Orthopedic Surgeons

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**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to characterize content posted by orthopedic surgeons on social media while investigating patient perceptions of this content and how it may influence their healthcare decisions.

**Methods:** Social media posts by orthopedic surgeons were reviewed and categorized. A survey was written utilizing insight from these categorized posts and administered to patients during clinic visits of three orthopedic sports medicine surgeons. One surgeon had high social media utilization (HSM), one had moderate social media utilization (MSM), and one had no social media utilization (NSM).

**Results:** There were 250 completed patient surveys. Overall, 65.6% of patients stated that they use social media every day while 10% never use social media. Social media use was common at all ages, but the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups were significantly more likely than older age groups to report daily social media usage (86.6% vs 47.6%;  $p < 0.05$ ). There were no statistically significant differences in social media usage or likelihood of a patient to look up a physician/surgeon on social media between the HSM surgeon's patients and the NSM surgeon's patients. Most patients in the survey never (64.8%) seek information about healthcare on social media and 71.2% of patients said they never viewed the social media account of a physician or surgeon. However, 21% of patients have done so more than one time. In each instance there were no statistically significant differences between surgeons. Patients held the most consistently positive view of posts educating patients, discussing sports team coverage, and providing patient testimonials. Patients held consistently neutral views of posts educating colleagues, discussing presentations at national meetings, displaying aspects of surgeons' personal lives, and supporting marginalized groups. Several post categories elicited negative or highly polarized responses including those discussing research publications, showing surgical technique pictures/videos, showing pictures or videos taken of the surgeon in the operating room, political statements, or showing pictures from a patient's own surgery.

**Conclusion:** Overall, patients presenting to the clinic of a HSM surgeon do not appear to use social media more often or in different ways related to their healthcare compared to those presenting to the clinic of a NSM surgeon. Roughly 1 in 5 patients frequently use social media to seek information about their healthcare or to view physician's social media accounts. Certain types of social media content are viewed more favorably and may help to improve interactions with these patients.