The majority of American adults use social media (SM) daily1 and utilization of various social networking platforms among orthopedic surgery patients continues to rise 3, 5. Surgeon social media presence has seen a notable increase as well1, 6. It has been established that social media presence is correlated with higher online ratings3, 4, while increasing patient engagement, exposure, and education without added costs1, 4. A recent pilot study conducted by our group at the University of Colorado identified high SM usage among patients10.1% every month user, 8.9% every week user, 13.5% never user, 25%, 15%, 5.3% several times per year user, 35-44 (87.6%) age groups more likely to report daily use (p=0.002). However, social media utilization was high among all age groups with 71% of all patients and at least 60.1% of patients in each age group reporting weekly or daily usage. 31% of patients reported using social media to see information about their healthcare at least once per month, 44% of patients reported reviewing the social media account of a physician at least a few times a year, and 26% of patients reported that they were likely or very likely to view the social media account of their own physician. 29% of patients reported that social media content is likely or very likely to influence which physician they see, while only 6% of patients considered a large social media following important or very important. Patients held the most consistently positive view of posts educating patients, discussing sports team coverage, and providing patient testimonials. Several post categories elicited negative or highly polarized responses including those discussing research publications, showing surgical technique pictures/videos, discussing sports team coverage, and providing patient testimonials. Several post categories elicited negative or highly polarized responses including those discussing research publications, showing surgical technique pictures/videos, and across countries1, Pew Research Center: 1, 6.

The purpose of this study was to characterize content posted by orthopedic surgeons on social media while investigating patient perceptions of this content from various institutions across different regions of the United States. We analyzed how this content may influence respondents’ healthcare decisions.

Methods

Social media posts by orthopedic surgeons from around the country were reviewed and categorized. A recent pilot study conducted by our group at the University of Colorado identified high SM usage among patients10.1% every month user, 8.9% every week user, 13.5% never user, 25%, 15%, 5.3% several times per year user, 35-44 (87.6%) age groups more likely to report daily use (p=0.002). However, social media utilization was high among all age groups with 71% of all patients and at least 60.1% of patients in each age group reporting weekly or daily usage. 31% of patients reported using social media to see information about their healthcare at least once per month, 44% of patients reported reviewing the social media account of a physician at least a few times a year, and 26% of patients reported that they were likely or very likely to view the social media account of their own physician. 29% of patients reported that social media content is likely or very likely to influence which physician they see, while only 6% of patients considered a large social media following important or very important. Patients held the most consistently positive view of posts educating patients, discussing sports team coverage, and providing patient testimonials. Several post categories elicited negative or highly polarized responses including those discussing research publications, showing surgical technique pictures/videos, discussing sports team coverage, and providing patient testimonials. Several post categories elicited negative or highly polarized responses including those discussing research publications, showing surgical technique pictures/videos, and across countries1, Pew Research Center: 1, 6.

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