



GLOBAL SKIN HEALTH

INSTAGRAM AND DERMATOLOGY

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Background: Within the last decade, social media has rapidly become an integral part of life. Instagram is a free photo and video-sharing social networking service with over 1 billion active users. For certain visually rich specialties like dermatology, the future of health care may be intertwined within the images and video posts of social media platforms like Instagram. Many of our technologically savvy patients are starting to consult social media platforms, including Instagram, as well as the internet to seek out medical help, especially for problems concerning a visual discipline like dermatology. Whilst many dermatologists and formal dermatology groups have not created Instagram accounts for professional purposes, many of our patients do expect this online presence as we progress into a more technologically advanced world.

Observation: Dermatologists that have started using Instagram have garnered over millions of followers by posting images or videos of common dermatological procedures or insights into their lives. Instagram gives dermatologists the opportunity to promote and advocate for health by increasing patient-physician communication without being confined to an office and limited by working hours. An analysis of the current trending dermatology-based Instagram accounts found that the majority of users were from cosmetic companies or private offices with the minority being run by certified dermatologists.

Key message: For visually rich disciplines like dermatology, Instagram has great potential as an educational tool due to its interactive and collaborative nature. It can help facilitate clinical and non-clinical exchanges by imparting medical knowledge to the general public as well as education to health care providers. Although it is currently underutilised by dermatologists this platform will likely become implicated in the future of our health care system.

