

Use of Social Media by Dental Professionals in Kerala- An Online Survey

Dr Iris Valsan¹, Dr. Arya Premnath², Dr Dhanya Raghunathan³, Dr Suchitra A⁴

¹Senior Resident, Department of Public Health Dentistry, Government Dental College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

²Junior Resident, Department of Periodontics, PMS Dental College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

³Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health Dentistry, Government Dental College, Alappuzha, Kerala, India

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Periodontics, Government Dental College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

Abstract: Background: Despite being used for entertainment reasons, social media has many other uses too. If properly used social and web media can bring big boons to the dental profession. And if not used well it can bring both professional and personal dilemmas

Aim: The objective of the study was to evaluate the dental professionals' use of social media.

Materials and Methods: The research was conducted using Google forms. There were 17 questions in the questionnaire. The link containing the prepared form was sent to dental professionals' mail ids. A total of 414 responses were received.

Results: Of 414 respondents, 68.1% used textbooks and publications to update their knowledge. The most commonly used social media was Facebook (88.2%). 63% was using the social media late night (after 10 pm) 'sometimes, 30% responded saying they use social media after 10 pm most of the time. Portable devices (95.4%) were more used than desktops. 91.8% used social media on a daily basis. Noticeably 26.8% used social media more than once in an hour. 88.6% used YouTube to watch dental videos. Dental professionals used social media for updating news and events (69.3%) and for education purposes (66.2%)

Keywords: dental, facebook, internet, social media, web

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I. Introduction

In our daily life, social media has a significant influence. The reach of social media has gone beyond the old concept as a medium for entertainment and messaging. The definition of social media has been constantly changed and modified. Over the last decade, online social networking sites (SNSs) have become increasingly popular, with people participating in SNSs to connect with others who share comparable interests. The incessant use of internet may result in compulsive use of SNSs, which in extreme cases may result in symptoms and consequences traditionally associated with substance-related addictions¹. Social Media usage is a "global consumer phenomenon" with an exponential rise within the past few years. The use of social media websites is among the common activity for today's adolescents, they are sometimes overused/misused, which may lead to social media addiction². The Internet and its use among today's kids and adolescents have increased. Any website is considered a social media site (including Social Networking Sites [SNSs] such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter; gaming sites; video sites such as YouTube and Blogs) because it allows social interaction³. The methods of communications have changed a lot by the entry of internet. Facebook use by students has specific pros and cons. Particularly, the excessive use of online social media may contribute to misuse, dependence, and addictive behaviours⁴

II. Materials And Methods

Google forms which is an effective computerized questionnaire system⁵ was used to conduct the study. 17 questions were used in total. The questions were entered in Google forms for conducting the online survey. Email ids of dental professionals and students working and studying in Kerala were collected. The online questionnaire was sent to the collected email ids. The subject of the email stated the title of the study. Along with the link⁶ directing to the Google survey site, the purpose of the study was clearly stated. The dental professionals were given full freedom whether to participate or leave the survey link provided. Convenience sampling was used.

Apart from asking Professional and demographic data, the questionnaire included how the respondents used social media. The usage time was asked and the amount of time they spend on social media was asked. Different kinds of social media that they used were asked and they were enquired about the effect they have on them. Data collection took 2 months. After the initial sending of the email, another mail was sent after one month reminding about the questionnaire along with the link. The main aim of the study was to find about the usage of social media among the dental fraternity and from the results, further studies regarding the harmful effects of social media could be done.

III. Results

A total of 414 dental professionals responded. Out of 414 participants, 51.2% were females and 48.8% males. 42.8% of the study participants were of age between 31-40.34.1% were of age group 26-30. MDS professionals were 58.7% and BDS professionals were 41.3%. 68.1% of the participants used textbooks and journals to update their knowledge.53.6% took help of mentors or colleagues to update their dental knowledge.39.4% used Wikipedia for updating the knowledge.32.1% use SlideShare for updating knowledge while 31.2% used Facebook groups to update knowledge.

LinkedIn is a business and employment-oriented service that operates via websites and mobile apps. It is mainly used for professional networking, including employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their curriculum vitae. LinkedIn thus is a social media for professionals. It has been discovered that 70 % of the total respondents used LinkedIn. The most commonly used social media was Facebook (88.2%), followed by Instagram (38.4%). 63% gave the answer ‘sometimes’ when asked the question regarding using the social media late night (after 10 pm), 30% responded saying they use social media after 10 pm most of the time, only 7% didn’t use social media after 10 pm. Thus the results indicate a high prevalent pattern of after-night use of social media.

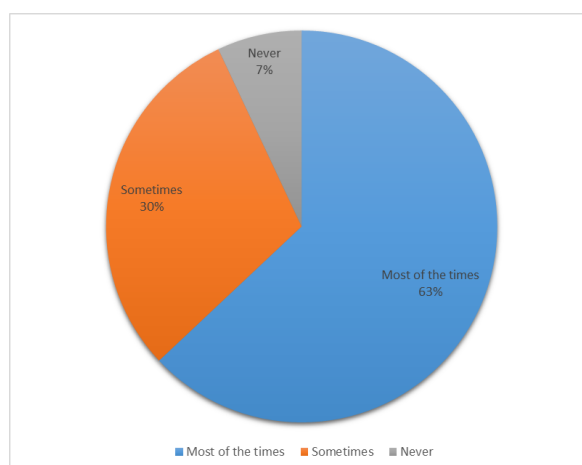


Fig 1: Usage of social media late night (after 10 pm)

The advancement of technology has made it easier to assess communication methods and knowledge seeking methods. Use of desktops and laptops has significantly decreased. People now prefer more portable devices like tablets and smartphones. 95.4% of the dental professionals participated in the study used portable devices like tablets and smartphones to use social media.

Social media is a very good tool to market any profession. One can spread knowledge and expertise, and seek attention by posting pictures, videos and articles. 72.9% of the research respondents used social media to market their profession. 91.8 % used social media daily. This shows that dental professionals are widely using social media on a daily basis, and only about 6% only use it weekly. To the question ‘If using social media daily how often do you use it’ 41.3% responded by saying they use it during mornings and evenings. Noticeably 26.8% used social media more than once in an hour. This indicated the social media dependence among dental professionals.

Gaining knowledge was easier in the last decade due to the emergence of the internet. Nowadays there are a lot of webinars and online classes related to dentistry on the internet. In the study, 15.7% have attended more than three webinars and online classes in the last one year.15% attended one webinar or online class in last one year. 50.5% have not attended any webinars and online classes.

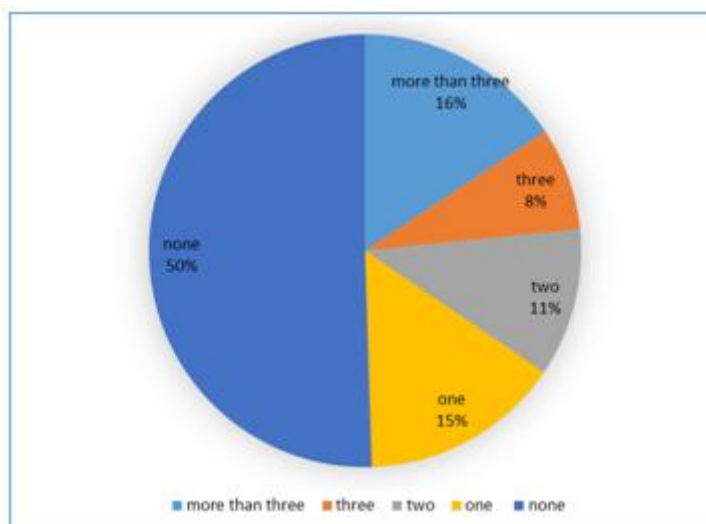


Figure 2: Number of webinars and online classes attended in last one year

Just like acquiring knowledge it is also important to spread the knowledge you have acquired to the world, and social media is a wonderful medium to spread knowledge as it has no bounds attached, a person from any country can read and understand it. Only 38.6% put knowledge and expertise in social media, WhatsApp and video networks like YouTube etc. Web (33.1%) is the most prevalent location that most participants looked into when they required professional assistance. Collaboration is a must to carry out research and projects. There are many collaboration applications that assist in doing things in groups. 78.7% have not used any collaboration applications for research and projects, and only 21.3% used a collaboration application.

88.6% searched and watched YouTube for acquiring dental knowledge. YouTube has a wide selection of videos related to the dental profession. Along with the use of social media for maintaining contacts with friends and family (72.2%) it is used for updating news and events (69.3%) and for gaining knowledge and education (66.2%)

IV. Discussion

Facebook is the most commonly used social media website. In the studies conducted by Aashly et al⁷ and Henry RK et al⁸, it was found that 77.17% and 98% of the study population used Facebook, which is on par with 88.2% usage in the present study. A study was done by Renee Garrett et al⁹ social media impact quality of sleep. In the present study about 93 % use social media at night. In the study done by Levenson J C et al¹⁰, it was found that one third of the study participants used social media before going to sleep. Study done by Hana Alsobayel¹¹, 70.6% of total study participants use social media for their professional development which corresponds to the present study which was 66.2%. High usage of social media for reading journals and to use Wikipedia shows the strength of the social media. The amount of knowledge one can acquire using it is limitless. Online social media tools can be some of the most rewarding and informative resources for professionals—only if you know how to use them in proper way.

V. Recommendations

Proper knowledge should be given to dental and medical experts about the uses and damaging impacts of social media. Results provided can be used for future interventions to improve sleep quality among college students and dental professionals. There is a wide scope to market dental expertise in social media as very few use it for that purpose. 55.2% use social media at least once in two hours. This may lead to social media addiction. Appropriate steps should be taken for preventing physical and mental issues happening while using electronic gadgets for long hours. Importance of webinars and online dental classes and collaboration apps are to be imparted towards dental professionals.

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