

Social Media Can Play a Major Role in Preventing Skin Cancer in Adolescents and Young Adults

EL PASO , TEXAS, UNITED STATES, November 9, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Social media has revolutionized the way our world receives and interprets information. For example, the largest newspaper in the United States by circulation is USA Today which reaches approximately 1.6 million people per week. Contrastingly, there are over 3.51 billion people actively using

Facebook, Instagram or WhatsApp each month. This represents an enormous platform to distribute health information as one study estimated up to 39% of adults turn to social media for health information.



Dermatologists should consider creating content specifically aimed at adolescents and young adults to highlight skin cancer prevention and identification”

Mary Cavanagh, BS

A newly published article in SKIN, The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine, identifies how social media represents a promising platform for education among adolescents and young adults in skin cancer prevention. Instagram has over 1 billion users per month and 90% of them are less than 35 years of age. Instagram was identified as the as the social

media platform with the highest number of postings about skin cancer awareness. Postings regarding skin cancer mostly focused on the following topics: skin cancer treatment, the impact of sun exposure and specific preventative measures such as use of sunscreen. Most importantly, about a 25% of the posts focused on identifying the most dangerous type of skin cancer (melanoma) by teaching readers about the ABCDE method of melanoma detection.

Recent studies have shown that there has been an increase in sunscreen use in adolescents in grades 6-12 from 2007 to 2019, as opposed to a decrease in sunscreen use from 1999-2009 in these same grades. The authors of these studies cited an increase in skin cancer prevention content on social media as a possible explanation for increased use of sunscreen in this population.

Mary Cavanagh, BS, the lead author of the manuscript states that “dermatologists and other healthcare specialties and societies have already successfully utilized social media for patient education but should consider creating content specifically aimed at adolescents and young adults to highlight skin cancer prevention and identification.” It is clear that social media is a powerful venue for distributing information on skin cancer and it is up to physicians and relevant

medical societies to ensure valid information is being propagated on these platforms.

[SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine](#)[®] is a peer-reviewed online medical journal that is the official journal of The National Society for Cutaneous Medicine. The mission of SKIN is to provide an enhanced and accelerated route to disseminate new dermatologic knowledge for all aspects of cutaneous disease.

For more details please visit www.jofskin.org or contact jofskin@gmail.com.

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