



Minimally Invasive Cosmetic Procedures, Social Media, and Oral-Maxillofacial Surgery: Use of Trends for the Modern Practice

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The integration of social media into global communities has influenced human activity and the methods used to seek the latest information regarding diet, fashion, and beauty. Platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are developing into essential modes of growth for cosmetic treatment. Reviews and testimonials shared on social media by influencers and celebrities are a new word-of-mouth. Users are eagerly pursuing cosmetic procedures that provide opportunities to adopt an esthetic seen on their timelines and newsfeeds. As such, oral and maxillofacial surgeons (OMSs) should be familiar with emerging cosmetic trends. This allows OMSs to gain a better understanding of who to target, what procedures to offer, and popular products by location. The field of cosmetic treatment is evolving, and a strong social media presence may provide OMSs an advantage in maintaining a modern practice, educating patients, and increasing their practice's reach.

Recently published by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, the number of facial cosmetic procedures increased 6% from 2018 to 2019. During this time, 85% of the total number of procedures performed were considered to be minimally invasive. Skin treatments increased by 39%, fillers increased by 13%, and use of neurotoxins increased by 12%.¹ However, as per Google Trends (GT), searches for invasive "facial cosmetic surgery" over the last decade have decreased.

The transition to minimally invasive cosmetic treatment may be in part due to a growth in social media use. In a questionnaire distributed to college-aged female Instagram users, more than 50% of respondents followed surgeons or influencers who discussed cosmetic procedures. A quarter of individuals responded as negatively comparing their appearance to celebrities. The majority of these participants responded as preferring nonsurgical treatment.² Users of social media are predominantly of the millennial generation and may be inclined to seek the newest, quickest, and easiest way to improve their appearance with minimal risk.³ This generation may be willing to commit to minimally invasive treatment owing to its instant gratification, reversibility, and reduced financial cost.

As a relationship between social media usage and appearance dissatisfaction has emerged,² promotion of image self-awareness may be contributing to an increased desire for cosmetic treatment. In 2019, 72% of cosmetic surgeons reported that patients wished to improve the appearance of their "selfies." This statistic has increased 15% from 2018. In addition, the percentage of patients requesting the same procedure as a celebrity increased 4%.¹ GT search results support these observations. For example, "lip filler" searches have steadily increased in popularity from 2014, exhibiting its highest peak of interest during July 2018. Related searches to "lip filler" with the greatest increase in frequency were "Kylie lip filler" and

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“Kylie Jenner before lip filler”. Interestingly, July 2018 corresponds with when Kylie Jenner, a popular social media influencer and celebrity, was heavily promoting a lip cosmetic product via Instagram. In addition, viral trends involving surgical procedures, such as “mewing,” gained popularity, not because of sound scientific evidence but because of social influencers advertising to their followers.⁴ The power of social media should not be underestimated. Users are clearly guided by the actions of influencers and their advertisement of cosmetic treatment. With this in mind, an OMS should be informed of cosmetic trends on social media.

With the use of GT and Instagram hashtags, OMSs may easily incorporate trends from social media and internet searches into their practice. They may examine search results over a time period and compare facial cosmetic treatments. For example, OMSs may simultaneously search the types of dermal fillers, such as Juvederm or Sculptra, to gauge patient interest at a moment in time. These trends may act as a guide to inform OMSs on which products they should be trained in and which procedures they should advertise. An additional feature of GT is to analyze search results in specific geographic areas, allowing OMSs to tailor their offerings to the search results that are common in their region. The related queries feature also allows OMSs to identify actively searched products and procedures. Understanding these trends may allow OMSs to more successfully cater to the desires of their patients, ultimately growing their practice.

Strategically marketing cosmetic services to patients may be a requirement for success in a competitive health care environment. In addition to traditional marketing, an OMS should meet cosmetic patients in their domain: social media. Successful OMS Instagram accounts exist, proving that it is viable for an OMS to build a presence on social media. These popular accounts also confirm that there is public interest in following OMSs. Creating and sharing content on social media is free, whereas television, billboard, and magazine advertisements elevate costs and practice overhead. As most social media users are of the younger generation,³ this also provides OMSs an opportunity to advertise and offer cosmetic procedures to patients who are referred for extraction of third molars. OMSs can continue to provide services for this population over their lifetime. In addition, this generation may place significant trust in influencers. OMSs may offer services to prominent influencers in exchange for advertising to their followers. This may expand a practice’s reach and increase the likelihood

of convincing an apprehensive patient regarding minimally invasive cosmetic procedures.

As a component of practice management, OMSs may post educational content regarding popular cosmetic procedures and products. Many of the related top searches regarding “cosmetic treatment” from GT include “before and after.” As such, if patients allow release of their photographs and video, surgeons may publish progress of treatments and before and after posts. While interacting digitally may promote the cosmetic aspect of a practice, the connections generated with patients via social media may also act as an introduction for other noncosmetic treatment. Currently, dental providers refer most cosmetic procedures to plastic surgeons.⁵ This inclination may be due to a lack of understanding of the core procedures of an OMS. Social media also provides an opportunity to educate dental providers that minimally invasive cosmetic procedures are within the true scope of oral and maxillofacial surgery, thereby increasing the referral base of a practice.

As modern society increasingly consumes content via social media, cosmetic procedures may now be influenced by trends on these platforms. Procedure popularity seen from traditional marketing may become outdated. In today’s digital age, minimally invasive cosmetic procedures have found its niche. By using search data via GT and developing a presence on social media, OMSs can be aware of cosmetic trends, while also growing their practice and fine-tuning their services. The ability of social media to impact the future of oral-maxillofacial surgery cosmetic treatment should not be disregarded but instead embraced to maximize practice prosperity.

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