

“Skinfluencers” versus dermatologists as creators of the top dermatology-related videos on TikTok

Introduction

- Social media easily allow physicians and patients alike to disseminate information.
- Over 80% of people seek medical information online and 90% of Gen Zs often turn to social media to seek medical advice.
- TikTok is the world’s fastest-growing social media platform with >1 billion active users.
- It uses artificial intelligence algorithms to provide personalized feeds that prompts users to spend more time on the platform.

Objectives

- To understand the credentials, aims, and promotions of creators of the top dermatology-related videos on TikTok.

Methods

- The keywords “skincare” and “black skincare” were queried on TikTok in August 2022.
- The top 50 posts for each search term and their creators’ profiles were analyzed.
- Non-English posts were excluded.
- Data on the topic and purpose of each post were recorded, as well as the creator’s profession, the number of followers, likes, total posts (May-July 2022), and sponsored posts.
- The Federal Trade Commission guidelines were used to define sponsored posts.

Results and Analysis

- Three posts were excluded as they contained videos not in English, leaving 97 posts in our analysis.
- Most were educational (34%) or opinion-based (20.6%), but only 5/97 videos (5.2%) were posted by board-certified dermatologists.
- Nearly 63% of top videos were posted by bloggers.
- Dermatologists in our search had 555,540 total followers and 12,800,000 total likes on average while bloggers had 811,641 total followers and 31,113,226 total likes on average.

Discussion and Conclusion

- The TikTok algorithm is driven by engagement; the more likes and views a TikTok post receives, the more likely it will be shared to larger audiences.
- Of 97 top TikTok videos on skincare, only 5 were posted by board-certified dermatologists. Bloggers’ posts had 2.4 times more likes than those of board-certified dermatologists, in addition to having nearly 1.5 times more followers.
- We hope that the results of our study serve to increase patients’ awareness in healthcare decision-making and highlights the need for dermatologists to promote high-quality evidence-based information for skincare on TikTok and other social media platforms.

Table 1. “Characteristics of top skincare-related posts on TikTok”

Account Characteristics	Total (97)	Percent	Mean # Total Followers	p-value	Mean # Total Likes	p-value
Credentials				0.85		0.71
Board-Certified Dermatologist	5	5.2%	555,540		12,800,000	
Physician/Nurse/HCP	4	4.1%	55,487		1,236,275	
Blogger	61	62.9%	811,641		31,113,226	
Esthetician	12	12.4%	213,672		2,108,254	
Entrepreneur	8	8.6%	329,573		9,417,262	
Stylist/Artist	4	4.1%	262,615		5,017,750	
Other	3	3.1%	66,249		1,938,400	
Account Type				0.56		0.42
Educational/Demo/Skincare Routine	33	34.0%	368,614		8,214,586	
Marketing	12	12.4%	1,167,342		71,324,958	
Education/Marketing	15	15.5%	748,421		20,774,813	
Patient Story/Testimony	14	14.4%	108,682		2,981,071	
Opinion	20	20.6%	802,945		51,337,240	
Other	3	3.1%	1,333,127		32,797,867	

References

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