



“Assessment of Knowledge on Social Media Usage and Its Influence on Clinical Practices among Dentists in Patna City, Bihar – A Cross Sectional Survey”

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ABSTRACT:

Background: The use of social media in dentistry is emerging especially in current scenario of Covid 19 pandemic. An important factor to assess is dental educators' level of familiarity with these social networks. Reviewing the dental literature, studies that assess the dentists' use of social media are lacking.

Aim: - To assess the knowledge on usage of social media and its influence on clinical practice among dentists in Patna city, Bihar.

Objective: 1. To assess the knowledge on usage of social media and its influence on clinical practice among dentists in Patna city, Bihar. 2. To compare usage of social media according to educational qualification & nature of practice among Dentists in Patna.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted among simple random sample of 150 dentists who are practicing in Patna, Bihar. A close-ended questionnaire containing 2 major sections pertaining to demographic details and 15 questions related to Knowledge & usage of social media and its influence on clinical practice among dentists was used. Data were collected, compiled & tabulated using Microsoft excel & analyzed by Chi-square test with $p < 0.05$ as significant.

Result: - An overall majority of the study subjects 51.3% uses social media in their profession. Majority of the study subjects 84(56%) used Social media for Exchanging opinions/views regarding cases with colleagues among which majority subjects 57(38%) were post graduate which is statistically significant.

Conclusion: From this study it is clear that majority of the dentist used social media in their

profession. Thus we can say that when used wisely and prudently, social media sites and platforms offer the potential to promote individual and public health, as well as professional development and advancement.

KEYWORDS:-Social Media, clinical practice, public health.

I. INTRODUCTION:

The world has witnessed a sea of change in the recent times, be it science, technology or the social influence.¹ Today technology has grown to such an extent that humans are dependent to its best. The continuous advances in technology have led to the appearance of numerous new methods of electronic communication and the best example of this is the use of Social Media or Social Networking.² The definition of “social media” is broad and constantly evolving. The term generally refers to Internet-based tools that allow individuals and communities to gather and communicate; to share information, ideas, personal messages, images, and other content and in some cases to collaborate with other users in real time. Social media are also referred to as “Web 2.0” or “social networking.”³

Across India, there are 143 million users of social media of which 118 million are of urban areas and 25 million from rural India. Facebook emerged the leading social media website with 96% of urban users accessing it, followed by Google Plus (61%), Twitter (43%), and LinkedIn (24%). The largest segment of users is college going students (34%), followed by young men (27%) and school children (12%). Thus there is an



ongoing increase in the use of social media globally as well as in India, in almost every field including in health care.¹ Most of the population is using Social media via smartphones which include many social networking sites and it is widely spread currently.⁴

When focusing on social media for health communication, it is useful to first outline the general characteristics of social media. Social media is changing the nature and speed of health care interaction between individuals and health organizations.⁵ In current scenario of Covid 19 pandemic the doctors, hospitals, and other health care professionals are using social media to market, communicate, and connect with their patients.⁷ Recently, dentistry has also shown an interest in using social media to communicate and market to its patients.⁶ An important factor to assess is dental educators' level of familiarity with these social networks. If dental educators are not accustomed or receptive to these new applications, the utility of social media to facilitate teaching and learning may be under recognized, and not fully explored.⁸

Reviewing the dental literature, studies that assess the dentists' use of social media are lacking. No studies were found to address the use of social media among dental Faculty member in Patna. Hence, the present study was planned with an aim of assessing the knowledge on usage of social media and its influence on clinical practice among dentists in Patna City, Bihar. This is important to establish whether social media improves dental health practices.

II. OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the knowledge on usage of social media and its influence on clinical practice among dentists in Patna, Bihar.
2. To compare usage of social media according to educational qualification among Dentists in Patna, Bihar.
3. To compare usage of social media according to nature of practice among Dentists in Patna, Bihar.

III. METHODOLOGY:

A cross sectional study was conducted among dentists from September 2020 to October 2020 in Patna. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board, Patna and Informed Consent was obtained from the participants.

A total of 150 dentists irrespective of age or academic interest from Patna were selected for the study by simple random sampling method. The data was collected using a close-ended questionnaire which consisted of 2 major sections.

Section I included the demographic details of the participants and section II included 15 questions related to knowledge and usage of social media and its influence on clinical practices.

The collected data were organized, tabulated and statistically analysed using SPSS software statistical computer package, version 22. All the results were expressed in terms of percentage proportion. Data comparison was done by applying specific statistical tests to find out the statistical significance of the comparisons. The various parameters used for the purpose of analysis were arithmetic mean, standard deviation and standard error. Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS, Statistics Windows, version 22 (Armonk, NY: IBM Corp). For the comparison of proportions, Chi-square test & ANOVA was used with continuity correction whenever appropriate. 'P' value of < 0.05 was taken to be statistically significant for the purpose of analysis.

IV. RESULTS

The present study was conducted among 150 dental professionals who were practicing dentistry in Patna, of which majority of 81.3% were males and the rest 18.7% were females. (Table 1) A majority of 34.7% subjects were in age group of 37-46 years, followed by 34% subjects who were in age group for ≥ 47 years and 31.3% subjects were in age group for ≤ 36 years. (Table 2) And regarding their qualification, 76% of the subjects were postgraduate students and 24% were undergraduate students. (Table 3) The duration of the dental practices were assessed and the results showed that a majority of 60.7% study subjects were practicing for ≤ 5 years, followed by 22.7% subjects who were in practice for > 10 years and only 16.7% subjects were practicing between > 5 years to ≤ 10 years. (Table 4) And lastly regarding the nature of work, a majority of 48.7% study subjects were both clinician and academician, followed by 41.3% who were academician only and the rest 10% were clinician only. (Table 5)

Table 6 & 7 shows the distribution of the subjects to various questions related to social media usage and their comparison with educational qualification & nature of practice of the subjects. An overall majority of the study subjects 51.3% uses social media in their profession. 36.7% of the study subjects frequently used social media in their profession. A majority of 34% study subjects visited WhatsApp social media for more information. Majority of 44% study subjects cater for both (self and public) while using certain social media sites in their profession. A majority of 53% study subjects communicate through social media

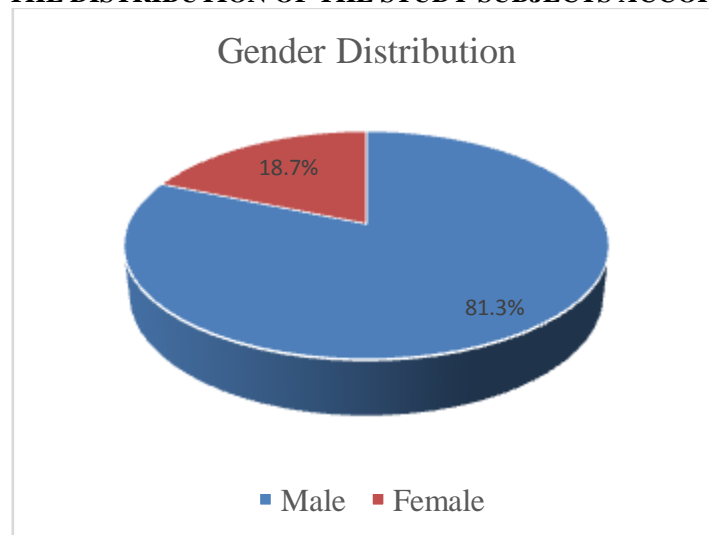


in their profession. 42.7% study subject didn't use social media for marketing purpose in their profession. A majority of 82.7% study subjects didn't own website in their profession. A majority of 43.3% study subjects felt that social media may be useful in improving the quality of care in their profession. 59.3% of study subject refer articles/research information from social media for clinical practice. A majority of 56.7% study subjects sometimes trust the credibility of information/content on social media. 46% of study subject sometimes felt that social media has some

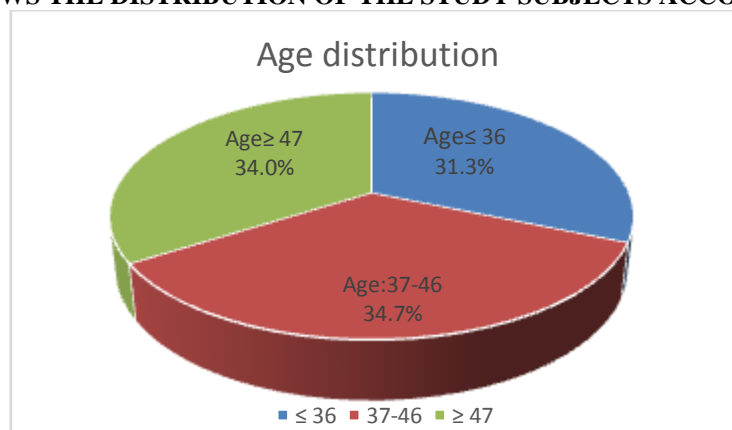
potential to affect decision/diagnosis for treatment. It was found that majority of the study subjects 38.7% sometimes felt that social media sites affect the relationship with their patient. A majority of 44% study subject favour patients to assess their information through social media. A majority of 45.3% study subjects felt that they will recommend medical/dental website for more information to the patient. Majority of the study subjects 84(56%) used Social media for Exchanging opinions/views regarding cases with colleagues and all these results were found to be statistically significant.

V. LIST OF TABLES & GRAPHS

GRAPH 1 SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO GENDER

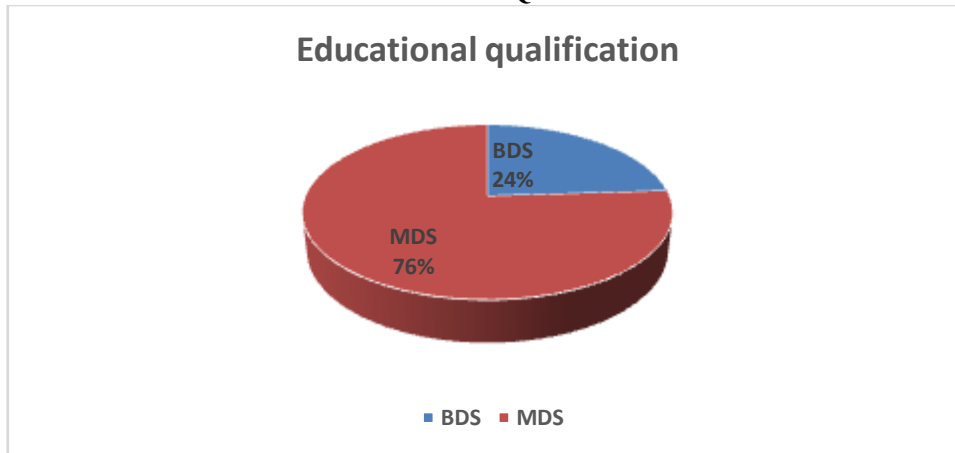


GRAPH 2 SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO AGE

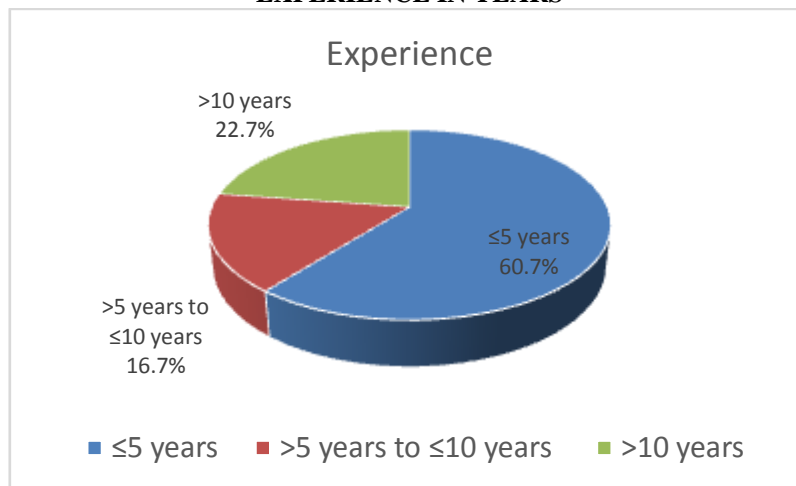




GRAPH 3 SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION



GRAPH 4 SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO EXPERIENCE IN YEARS



GRAPH 5 SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO NATURE OF WORK/PRACTICE

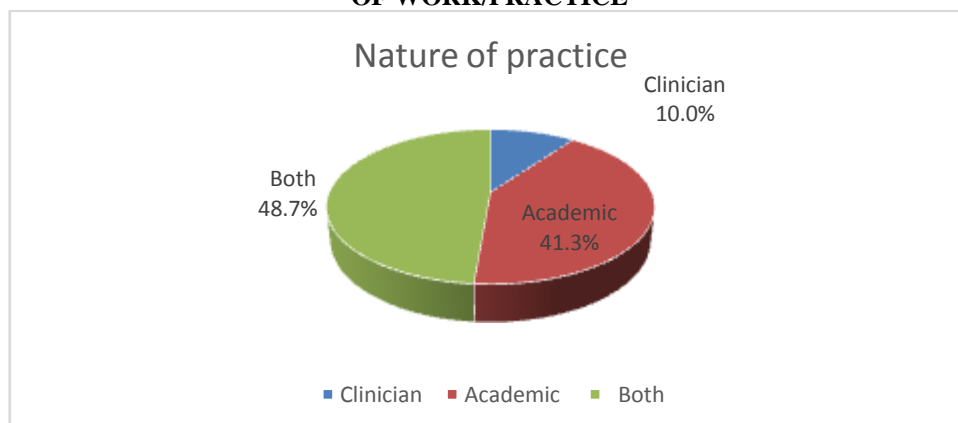




TABLE 6 SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUBJECTS TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS RELATED TO SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND THEIR COMPARISON WITH EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE SUBJECTS

Questionnaire	Response	BDS	MDS	Total	Test of significance
Do you use social media in your profession?	Yes	13(8.7%)	64(42.7%)	77(51.3%)	X ² value= 15.422 P=0.000 *
	No	14(9.3%)	12 (8%)	26(17.3%)	
	Sometimes	9(6%)	38(25.3%)	47(31.3%)	
How often do you use social media in your profession?	Never	15(10%)	11(7.3%)	26 (17.3%)	X ² value= 19.658 P=0.000 *
	Seldom	11(7.3%)	58(38.7%)	69(46%)	
	Frequently	10(6.7%)	45(30%)	55(36.7%)	
Which social media website do you mainly visit to attain information for your clinical profession?	Whatsapp	15(10%)	36(24%)	51(34%)	X ² value= 4.894 P=0.298 **
	Facebook	10(6.7%)	30(20%)	40(26.7%)	
	Twitter	0(0%)	1(0.7%)	1(0.7%)	
	Linked-in	4(2.7%)	6(4%)	10(6.7%)	
	Others	7(4.7%)	41(27.3%)	48(32%)	
Whom do you cater for when you use a certain social media site/s?	Self	13(8.7%)	39(26%)	52(34.7%)	X ² value= 14.392 P=0.001 *
	Public	0 (0%)	32(21.3%)	32(21.3%)	
	Both	23(15.3%)	43(28.7%)	66(44%)	
Do you use social media to communicate with other dental professional?	Yes	17(11.3%)	63(42%)	80(53.3%)	X ² value= 2.169 P=0.338 **
	No	3(2%)	15(10%)	18(12%)	
	Sometimes	16(10.7%)	36(24%)	52(34.7%)	
Do you use social media site for marketing purpose?	Yes	10(6.7%)	47(31.3%)	57(38%)	X ² value= 2.438 P=0.296 **
	No	19(12.7%)	45(30%)	64(42.7%)	
	Sometimes	7(4.7%)	22(14.7%)	29(19.3%)	
Do you have your own established online personal practice forums/websites?	Yes	2(1.3%)	24(16%)	26(17.3%)	X ² value= 4.586 P=0.032 *
	No	34(22.7%)	90(60%)	124(82.7%)	
	Under Process	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0.0%)	
Does social media improve the quality of care delivered to patient?	Yes	21(14%)	43(28.7%)	64(42.7%)	X ² value= 7.202 P=0.027 *
	No	1(0.7%)	20(13.3%)	21(14.0%)	
	May be	14(9.3%)	51(34%)	65(43.3%)	
Do you refer articles/research information regarding clinical practice from social media?	Yes	18(12%)	71(47.3%)	89(59.3%)	X ² value= 7.469 P=0.024 *
	No	10(6.7%)	11 (7.3%)	21(14%)	
	Sometimes	8(5.3%)	32(21.3%)	40(26.7%)	
Do you fully trust the credibility of information/content you see on social media?	Yes	3(2%)	16(10.7%)	19(12.7%)	X ² value= 1.170 P=0.557 **
	No	13(8.7%)	33(22%)	46(30.7%)	
	Sometimes	20(13.3%)	65(43.3%)	85(56.7%)	
Do you think	Yes	15(10%)	13(8.7%)	28(18.7%)	X ² value=



social media sites affect your decision making/diagnosis for your treatment plan?	No	1(0.7%)	52(34.7%)	53(35.3%)	28.573 P=0.000 *
	Sometimes				
		20(13.3%)	49(32.7%)	69(46%)	
Do social media sites affect the relationship with your patient who has sought information from these sites?	Yes	19(12.7%)	31(20.7%)	50(33.3%)	X ² value= 8.226 P=0.016 *
	No	8(5.3%)	34(22.7%)	42(28%)	
	Sometimes	9(6%)	49(32.7%)	58(38.7%)	
Would you favour allowing patients to assess their information through a website?	Yes	22(14.7%)	44(29.3%)	66(44%)	X ² value= 15.840 P=0.000 *
	No	12(8%)	23(15.3%)	35(23.3%)	
	Sometimes	2(1.3%)	47(31.3%)	49(32.7%)	
Would you recommend a trusted medical/dental website for more information to the patient?	Yes	24(16%)	44(29.3%)	68(45.3%)	X ² value= 10.429 P=0.005 *
	No	6(4%)	19(12.7%)	25(16.7%)	
	Sometimes	6(4%)	51(34%)	57(38%)	
What according to you is the most common reason for dentists using social media?	Connect/communicate with friends and family	5(3.3%)	32(21.3%)	37(24.7%)	X ² value= 6.941 P=0.031 *
	Exchange opinions/views regarding cases with colleagues	27(18%)	57(38%)	84(56%)	
	Marketing and advertising	4(2.7%)	25(16.7%)	29(19.3%)	
*Significant **Non Significant					

TABLE 7 SHOWS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUBJECTS TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS RELATED TO SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND THEIR COMPARISON WITH NATURE OF PRACTICE AMONG THE STUDY SUBJECTS

Questionnaire	Response	Clinician	Academic	Both	Total	Test of significance
Do you use social media in your profession?	Yes	3(2%)	42(28%)	32(21.3%)	77(51.3%)	X ² value= 47.297 P=0.000 *
	No	10(6.7%)	11(7.3%)	5(3.3%)	26(17.3%)	
	Sometimes	2(1.3%)	9(6%)	36(24%)	47(31.3%)	



How often do you use social media in your profession?	Never	11(7.3%)	11(7.3%)	4(2.7%)	26(17.3%)	X ² value= 68.035 P=0.000 *
	Seldom	4(2.7%)	14(9.3%)	51(34%)	69(46%)	
	Frequently	0(0%)	37(24.7%)	18(12%)	55(36.7%)	
Which social media website do you mainly visit to attain information for your clinical profession?	WhatsApp	3(2%)	28(18.7%)	20(13.3%)	51(34%)	X ² value= 30.637 P=0.000 *
	Facebook	6(4%)	5(3.3%)	29(19.3%)	40(26.7%)	
	Twitter	1(0.7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.7%)	
	Linked-in	1(0.7%)	3(2%)	6(4%)	10(6.7%)	
	Others	4(2.7%)	26(17.3%)	18(12%)	48(32%)	
Whom do you cater for when you use a certain social media site/s?	Self	11(7.3%)	22(14.7%)	19(12.7%)	52(34.7%)	X ² value= 21.547 P=0.000 *
	Public	0(0%)	20(13.3%)	12(8%)	32(21.3%)	
	Both	4(2.7%)	20(13.3%)	42(28%)	66(44%)	
Do you use social media to communicate with other dental professional?	Yes	8(5.3%)	47(31.3%)	25(16.7%)	80(53.3%)	X ² value= 26.242 P=0.000 *
	No	3(2%)	1(0.7%)	14(9.3%)	18(12%)	
	Sometimes	4(2.7%)	14(9.3%)	34(22.7%)	52(34.7%)	
Do you use social media site for marketing purpose?	Yes	3(2%)	31(20.7%)	23(15.3%)	57(38%)	X ² value= 16.809 P=0.002 *
	No	8(5.3%)	28(18.7%)	28(18.7%)	64(42.7%)	
	Sometimes	4(2.7%)	3(2%)	22(14.7%)	29(19.3%)	
Do you have your own established online personal practice forums/websites?	Yes	4(2.7%)	7(4.7%)	15(10%)	26(17.3%)	X ² value= 3.018 P=0.21 **
	No	11(7.3%)	55(36.7%)	58(38.7%)	124(82.7%)	
	Under Process	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	
Does social media improve the quality of care delivered to patient?	Yes	2(1.3%)	43(28.7%)	19(12.7%)	64(42.7%)	X ² value= 31.758 P=0.000 *
	No	3(2%)	4(2.7%)	14(9.3%)	21(14%)	
	May be	10(6.7%)	15(10%)	40(26.7%)	65(43.3%)	
Do you refer articles/research information regarding clinical practice from social media?	Yes	11(7.3%)	49(32.7%)	29(19.3%)	89(59.3%)	X ² value= 27.489 P=0.000 *
	No	0(0%)	2(1.3%)	19(12.7%)	21(14%)	
	Sometimes	4(2.7%)	11(7.3%)	25(16.7%)	40(26.7%)	
Do you fully trust the credibility of information/content you see on social media?	Yes	1(0.7%)	7(4.7%)	11(7.3%)	19(12.7%)	X ² value= 4.038 P=0.401 **
	No	6(4%)	23(15.3%)	17(11.3%)	46(30.7%)	
	Sometimes	8(5.3%)	32(21.3%)	45(30%)	85(56.7%)	
Do you think social media sites affect your decision making/diagnosis for your treatment plan?	Yes	4(2.7%)	16(10.7%)	8(5.3%)	28(18.7%)	X ² value= 11.765 P=0.019 *
	No	3(2%)	15(10%)	35(23.3%)	53(35.3%)	
	Sometimes	8(5.3%)	31(20.7%)	30(20%)	69(46%)	
Do social media sites affect the	Yes	5 (3.3%)	29(19.3%)	16(10.7%)	50(33.3%)	X ² value=
	No	6(4%)	15(10%)	21(14%)	42 (28%)	



relationship with your patient who has sought information from these sites?	Sometimes	4(2.7%)	18(12%)	36(24%)	58(38.7%)	11.509 P=0.0 21 *
Would you favour allowing patients to assess their information through a website?	Yes	6(4%)	20(13.3%)	40(26.7%)	66(44%)	X ² value= 9.836 P=0.0 43 *
	No	6(4%)	17(11.3%)	12(8%)	35(23.3%)	
	Sometimes	3(2%)	25(16.7%)	21(14%)	49(32.7%)	
Would you recommend a trusted medical/dental website for more information to the patient?	Yes	9(6%)	36 (24%)	23(15.3%)	68(45.3%)	X ² value= 11.961 P=0.0 18 *
	No	3(2%)	8(5.3%)	14(9.3%)	25(16.7%)	
	Sometimes	3(2%)	18(12%)	36(24%)	57(38%)	
What according to you is the most common reason for dentists using social media?	Connect/communicate with friends and family	5(3.3%)	13(8.7%)	19(12.7%)	37(24.7%)	X ² value= 2.369 P=0.6 68 **
	Exchange opinions/views regarding cases with colleagues	6(4%)	38(25.3%)	40(26.7%)	84(56%)	
	Marketing and advertising	4(2.7%)	11(7.3%)	14(9.3%)	29(19.3%)	
*Significant **Non Significant						

VI. DISCUSSION:-

In recent years, social media has become ubiquitous. The explosive growth of social media has provided millions of people the opportunity to create and share the content on a scale barely imaginable few years ago.¹ The literature provides ample evidence that social media can offer a wealth of opportunities for dental practitioners. It can assist dental practitioners to promote valuable professional relationships, improve the creation and synthesis of knowledge, permit better filtering of information and allow practitioners to reach a vast number of patients instantly in real-time. Social media, however, may offer critical opportunities for dentists to facilitate patient-dentist relationship outside the surgery.⁹ That said, we did not know much about how patients and dentists feel about direct communication with each other on social media. Hence the above study is done to assess the "knowledge on Social Media Usage and its Influence on clinical practices among Dentists in Patna, Bihar."

In the present study, comparatively the number of female's subject were lower when

compared to males and majority number of subjects were in age for 37-46 years (34.7%). It can be justified to the fact that in this part of the region, males are dominating when compared to females and family or domestic commitments keeps them away from clinical practices. This finding is in accordance with other studies conducted by Al Awdah AS et al and¹⁰ also there were more in the age group of 37-46 years (46.5%).¹⁴ There is an association between the frequency of social media interaction and age that the majority of current users are males under the age of 37-46 years.

In the present study among the total study subjects majority (60.7%) were in practice for ≤5 years. These finding were slightly higher when compared with findings of Makkar et al (44.3%)¹, L Snyman et al (18%)¹³, Campbell et al (6%)¹¹, Nancy Ajwa et al (27%)¹² and less as compared with Rachel K Henry et al (90%)⁹. The sudden burst in commitments and increased output of dental graduates in the recent times have shown increased number of clinic. Also in the present study among the total study subject, a majority of 48.7% were both working as clinician and



academician, 41.3% were academician and the rest 10% were clinician. This finding is higher in studies of Aboalshamat et al.¹⁵, where it was 76.8% for both clinician and academicians.¹⁸ In this part of the region most of subjects after completion of graduation or post-graduation they normally tend to get attached to institutions and start clinical practices, later it was reasoned that it would make their life styles better and provide stable economic status.

Our finding in the present study shows that majority of subjects 51.3% showed social media usage in dentistry, but it was seldom and this finding are in accordance with the study done by Rachel K Henry et al (51%)¹⁶ and less as compared with Makkar et al (64.8%)¹, Parmar et al (93%)¹⁰, Amal S Al Awdah et al (81.6%)¹⁴, Alalawi et al (95.3%)¹⁵.

Regarding visit of social media sites to obtain information for their clinical practice, it was found that majority of study subjects 34% visit WhatsApp, 26.7% visit Facebook, 6.7% visit linked-in and 0.7% visit twitter. This finding is in accordance with the study done by Makkar et al.¹, Rachel K Henry et al.⁹, Parmar et al.¹⁰, Campbell et al.¹¹ and M.R. Arnett et al.¹⁷. The most popular site for the present day is WhatsApp, the dominance it has over the market makes it a first choice for any one. Merging of WhatsApp and Facebook has further made the dominance more effective. Regarding whom do they cater for when they use certain social media websites, it was found that majority of study participants (44%) were reported the purpose of social media usage is to communicate with self and public. These findings were slightly less when compared with findings of Makkar et al (53.4%).¹ Regarding social media site usage for marketing purpose in dentistry, it was found that majority of the study subjects (42.7%) did not consider social networking sites to be serious media for the marketing of their practices out of which (30%) were post graduate and the sharing of information, while only (38%) had acquired patients through these networking sites. These results are lower with results of Rajan et al in which considerable majority (87%) did not consider social networking sites to be serious media for the marketing of their practices and the sharing of information, while only (12%) had acquired patients through these networking sites.²⁰ Thus, a core group of faculty members appears to be regular users of social media applications. As there is no doubt awareness of the popularity of social media sites with students, these educators may be more likely to integrate such applications in their teaching. Despite claims that

social media is becoming the most recent marketing phenomenon due to its remarkable advantages in the business area majority of the respondents did not use social media for marketing purposes.

Regarding whether social media websites improve the quality of care delivered to patient, it was found that majority of the study subjects (43.3%) may improve the quality of care in their profession out of which (34%) were post graduate. These findings were slightly less when compared with findings of Makkar et al in which considerable majority (54.5%) favour the opinion that social media has potential to improve the quality of care.¹

Regarding reference articles or research information usage in clinical practice from social media, it was found that majority of the study subjects (59.3%) use refer articles or research for their clinical practice out of which (47.3%) were post graduate. This is in contrast with the study done by Makkar et al where (59.1%) refer articles or research for clinical practice.¹ Regarding whether they fully trust the credibility of information/content on social media, it was found that majority of the study subjects (12.7%) trust the credibility of information/content on social media out of which (10.7%) were post graduate which is in accordance with the study done by Makkar et al where majority of subjects only, (10.2%) participants trust the credibility of information/content on social media.¹

Regarding whether social media has any effect on decision making/diagnosis for treatment in their clinical practice, it was found that majority of the study subjects (18.7%) responded that social media has some potential to affect decision or diagnosis for treatment out of which (8.7%) were post graduate which is in accordance with the study done by Makkar et al total of (50%) study participants responded that social media has some potential to affect decision or diagnosis for treatment.¹ Regarding whether they would recommend trusted medical/dental website for more information to the patient, it was found that majority of the study subjects (45.3%) would recommend medical/dental website for more information to the patient out of which (29.3%) were post graduate. These results are similar with a study done by Makkar et al in which considerable majority around (50%) study participants would recommend the website to patient.¹

Regarding the most common reason for dentists to use social media, it was found that majority of the study subjects (56%) communicate with other dental professionals on social media to exchange opinions/views regarding cases with



colleagues out of which (38%) were post graduate. Most of the respondents reported some utilization of social media applications with 4–5 sessions per day, mainly to serve public and other dental professionals, communicate with other dental professionals on social media to exchange opinions and views regarding cases with colleagues, and for referring articles or research for clinical practice. Similar results were reported in a study done by Snyman and Visser.⁵

The social media applications have potential to improve the quality of care delivered to patients according to the respondents of the survey. In an online cross sectional survey by Wicks et al²¹, established the range of benefits related to the extent of social media usage by patients. Most of the faculty members' trust the credibility of information/content on social media similar to survey conducted on patients and health care executives.²² Most of the study participants favoured affect the relationship with a patient who has social media accessibility. A study conducted by Bosslet et al²³ reported improved communication medical doctor–patients interactions due to social media usage. Majority of the study participants did not or sometimes allow patients to assess their information through a website cloud be due to the marginal usage of social media for marketing and advertisement or promotion of their practice. In case of recommendation of any trusted medical website to patients less than half respondents were in favour, maybe due to ethical and professional issues in concerned.

Limitation of the study is lack of literature and previous studies on this topic. This meant that a validated survey tool did not previously exist, and had to be created to study this topic in this population. As the survey tool did not undergo formal psychometric validation, we cannot be sure of the validity and reliability of the findings.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations are proposed:

1. We recommend more comparative studies with larger samples to establish whether social media improves oral health of the individual or community in both the short and long terms and to understand the best way to utilize social media and to understand its full potential.
2. Due to rapid growth in the utilization of social media applications by students and other members of society, dental educators should consider exploring the use of social media as an adjunct in teaching.

3. Since social media in dental education is still in its infancy, research should be undertaken to determine optimal ways for incorporating these technologies into both traditional and E- learning courses.
4. There is a need for education in the professional use of social media in dentistry to address concerns about appropriate use both legally and professionally.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The results of this study have demonstrated a variation in knowledge on Social Media Usage and its Influence on clinical practices among Dentists in Patna, Bihar.

From this study it is clear that majority of the dentist used social media in their profession but their frequency is seldom and they mainly visited WhatsApp to obtain information, to communicate with other dental professionals as well as patients, to exchange opinions/views regarding cases or refer articles/research paper for their clinical practice. Further this study reflects that social media websites improves the quality of care delivered to patient, has potential to affect decision or diagnosis for treatment and thus majority of the dentist would recommend medical/dental website for more information to the patient. Hence it is seen that Social media brings a new dimension to health care, offering a platform used by the public, patients, and health professionals to communicate about health issues with the possibility of potentially improving health outcomes. Thus we can say that when used wisely and prudently, social media sites and platforms offer the potential to promote individual and public health, as well as professional development and advancement.

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