# The influence of TikTok on perceptions of isotretinoin treatment



A study published in the medical journal Cureus has highlighted the critical role of social media, particularly TikTok, in shaping public understanding and attitudes toward isotretinoin, a medication frequently prescribed for treating acne. The research underscored the potential risks associated with the dissemination of misinformation on these platforms, especially given that acne vulgaris affects around 9% of the global population, predominantly individuals aged between 12 and 24 years, a demographic that aligns closely with TikTok’s user base.

The study's authors noted, “Acne vulgaris, affecting approximately 9% of the global population, primarily impacts individuals aged between 12 and 24 years, the predominant age group of TikTok users.” They explored the extent to which TikTok influences users' knowledge, perspectives, and treatment adherence regarding isotretinoin, which is known for its efficacy in managing severe acne through its action of inhibiting sebaceous gland function and reducing sebum production.

According to statistics reported by Statista, TikTok boasts approximately 1.6 billion daily users, ranking as the fifth most-used social media application worldwide. The researchers highlighted that a significant portion of young individuals—about 90% of teens and young adults—turn to social media for health-related information, which has implications for their health care decision-making.

“Isotretinoin is an oral systemic retinoid medication effective in treating acne at a pharmacologic dosage of 0.5 to 1.0 mg/kg per day,” the authors stated in their study. They emphasised the importance of scrutinising and understanding the impact of TikTok content on perceptions of isotretinoin, especially as other medications like glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) drugs have gained popularity in the realm of weight management due to social media influences.

The research team reviewed a sample of 50 TikTok videos related to isotretinoin, which were posted on the platform between August 2020 and February 2023. Through their analysis, they identified several key themes related to the videos, such as effectiveness, physical side effects, and psychological impacts, as well as knowledge dissemination and the treatment decision-making process.

The authors concluded that while TikTok may be a valuable tool for facilitating health discussions and increasing awareness about treatment options, there are considerable risks in terms of misinformation that could deter individuals from seeking appropriate medical care. “These findings emphasize social media platforms' role in disseminating health information about dermatological treatments like isotretinoin,” they wrote, advocating for dermatologists to monitor social media trends to both understand patient perspectives and mitigate the effects of any false information circulating online.

In light of the intricate relationship between social media and patient experiences, the researchers acknowledged the necessity for ongoing evaluation of the long-term effects of health education on platforms like TikTok, particularly concerning treatment adherence and patient outcomes. They stated, “Evaluating long-term effects of health education from TikTok regarding the impact on treatment adherence and patient outcomes is essential.”

In summary, the study's insights reflect a growing recognition of how digital platforms can influence health behaviours and expectations, particularly among younger demographics, and establish a foundation for continued research into the role of social media in healthcare communication.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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