



## **A Case Study on the Use of Social Media by a Health Professional in Aizawl**

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### ***Abstract***

*This paper is a case study on the use of social media by a health professional, particularly a dermatologist in Aizawl with focuses on the types of treatment patients get from the doctor on a regular basis and patient-doctor relationship. The study found out that there is an increase in the number of patients or clients getting certain beauty treatments after the dermatologist started using social media namely instagram for marketing. The case study is appropriate in uncovering the current scenario in terms of the types of beauty treatments that clients get and whether the beauty culture is affected by social marketing in any way. The case study revealed that more and more people, in the age of social media, have more pressure to look a certain way in terms of beauty standards and therefore are under increased expectations to look a certain way which thereby give rise to body image issues. This case study also revealed certain benefits and challenges of using social media by health professionals in Aizawl. The findings of the case study are proposed to extend further research in the effects of social media among healthcare professionals and patients.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Body Image Issues, Beauty Standards, Health.*

### **Introduction**

The rise of social media has created the boom of social media marketing. Businesses are thriving in the age of social media marketing. Health professionals are not left out in this market. According to another report by Pew Research, 80% of social media users are specifically looking for health information, and nearly half of those are searching for information about a specific doctor or health professional. There are many health professionals in Mizoram who have started using social media in their profession, yet no

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study has been done so far in terms of the usage of social media in promoting health. This prompted us to do a case study on the use of social media by a health professional in Aizawl.

### **Review of Literature**

Girardi (2019) expressed that health professionals must make use of social media to plan their marketing strategies since the reach of social media is very high. He found out that 30% of consumers liked the kind of content with more links to information from brands on social media, 18% preferred graphics and images, while 17% would like to see produced video. Jayanna (2019) found that social media is one of the most effective digital marketing methods which help increase the visibility of brands and businesses. She advised businesses to implement a strategy using social media which will have a direct impact on brand recognition. The usage of social media enables consumers to influence other buyers through reviews of products or services they used. Ahmad and Reena (2018) in their study on digital marketing in India found out that the buying behavior of consumers are changing and therefore businesses should cater to this changed behavior by using the digital platforms available online in selling their products. They also suggested that digital marketing provide more job opportunities.

Edin Smailhodzic et al. (2016) studied the use of social media by health professionals by reviewing 22 articles out of 1743 literature they identified. Social media use by patients was found to affect the healthcare professional and patient relationship. The study identified six categories of patients' use of social media, namely: emotional, information, esteem, network support, social comparison and emotional expression. They also identified seven types of effects on patients, namely improved self-management and control, enhanced psychological well-being, and enhanced subjective well-being, diminished subjective well-being, addiction to social media, loss of privacy, and being targeted for promotion. The findings show that patients use social media mainly for social support, which is represented through information support, emotional support, esteem support, and network support. The findings also show negative effects like diminished subjective well-being, addiction to social media, being targeted for promotion, and loss of privacy. Bashar and Ahmad (2012) in their study proposed that businesses have transformed the traditional transactional relationship to more of a social relationship with the help of social media marketing. They highlighted the need for good quality content from social media brands in order to get the best responses from consumers.

Blair and Shalmon (2005) in their study expressed that cosmetic surgery has become increasingly popular among everyone including teenagers in America and that the media play a significant role in the construction of beauty. They said that people become dissatisfied with their own natural appearances as compared to what they see in the media as ideal beauty. They also believed that 'before' and 'after' pictures attempted to provide scientific evidence that cosmetic surgery has not only improved appearances but also bring happiness. Sekayi (2003) in her study found out that the women acknowledge their discomfort with the way the media defines beauty for Black women and that the American standard of beauty is dominant and Eurocentric. She also expressed that pressure to meet beauty standards affects

women across the lifespan and that resisting the dominant aesthetic standard is a process that needs to start now by adults to educate younger children. Milkie (1999) in her study on media and the effects it has on self-concepts among young white and black teenagers found out that qualitative research is highly important to study something complex as media effects. She found out that even though most of the girls know most media images are altered or unreal, they still feel pressure to achieve the ideal images they see in the media.

### **Social Media in Mizoram**

Vanglaini's article on "Mizothalaiten Social Media anhmangnasa" (2019) found that all 500 respondents from five colleges in Aizawl used social media mostly to get information such as news and others. Most of the popular social media applications that they used are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Tumblr and YouTube. The research found that social media has greatly impacted the lives of the young people in Mizoram in their information consumption behaviour. The growth of telecommunications in Mizoram also plays a role in the growth of social media in the state. According to Mizoram Economic Survey 2019-2020, there are a total of 11,35,632 mobile phone connections subscribed in the state. According to Telecom Statistic India 2019, Mizoram has 237195 rural and 239212 urban internet connection subscribers.

Lalrampuii (2019) in her study of marketing through social media platforms in Aizawl found that most of the respondents used social media as their main source of information regarding products and services and that social media marketing has greatly influenced their buying habits. They also admitted to unplanned buying with the information they get on social media. This study further proved the level of engagement social media has with users in terms of selling products and services. Social media is truly the new word of mouth. Many entrepreneurs use social media for advertising their businesses and reach out to potential buyers. Plenty of Mizo online users have started to use the medium for selling handlooms, clothes, makeup, shoes and services like food catering. The use of social media as a marketing tool has recently become popular in Mizoram therefore only few studies have been conducted based on the specific area and more studies will definitely come up as we continue to use the platform. This is also the reason why this particular study on the use of social media by a health professional has come into play. We have not come across this particular study in Mizoram although many related studies have been done in other parts of the world according to the review of literature available as mentioned before. All the literature reviewed for this study found the influence of social media on marketing and the impact it has on consumers' buying behaviour. In this light, there is a need to find out the exact condition regarding the use of social media in terms of marketing and the influence it may have on the consumption pattern of people in Mizoram as well.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of the study is to find out:

- i) The effectiveness of using social media in particular instagram by a health professional.
- ii) The kinds of skin treatments that clients get from the health professional.

iii) The benefits and negative effects of using instagram for promoting health or beauty treatments by the health professional.

### **Methodology**

The methodology adopted an exploratory case study on a health professional in Aizawl using instagram as a tool for promotion. The qualitative case study is conducted with the help of intense interviews of both the doctor and the clients, and observations of the instagram posts. The period of the case study is conducted for four weeks from 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

### **Health Professional under Study**

The health professional under this study is Dr Manguri Ralte, M.D. (Dermatology) working at Civil Hospital Aizawl. She has a clinic at JC Medical Store, Dawrpui, Aizawl. She uses an Instagram account under the name drmanguriralte10 and has 5175 followers and 152 posts till the time this research was conducted. She started using her instagram account on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

### **Observation of Instagram Posts**

There are 11 instagram posts made during the period of study from 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019. First post, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019: The post is on acne and pimples. The doctor posted a short video clip of three clients with their before and after picture of the skin treatment procedure. The post also uses the hashtag of #acneprone #skinpimples. The post has 9 comments and 205 likes. All comments are praises about the procedure and the expertise of the doctor.

Second post, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019: The post is on non surgical nose jobs where the doctor posted two short video clips of her clients 'before' and 'after' pictures of the procedure. The post has 13 hashtags namely #nonsurgicalnosejobs #nonsurgicalshinoplasty #noselifting #facialaesthetics #nonsurgicalnoseliftaizawl #nosejobspecialist #nosethreads #nosethreadlifts #threadlifting #nosejobbeforeandafter #dermafillers #juvedermfillers #juverdermvoluma. The post has 17 comments and 190 likes. Most comments are praises of the doctor where one comment asked about the price and the doctor replied that it is according to her needs.

Third post, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019: the post is on non surgical nose jobs where the doctor posted three video clips of her clients 'before' and 'after' pictures of the procedure. It has 10 hashtags namely #nonsurgicalnosejobs #noselifts #nosejobsaizawl #facialaesthetics #threadlifting #nosecontouring #fillers #nosefillers #juvedermfillers. The post has 27 comments and 162 likes. Most comments are on praises of the doctor. Few of them asked about pricing and the doctor replied to them to book their appointment on the clinic phone number given in the link.

Fourth post, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019: The post is on skin tag removal where the doctor posted a video demonstration on the procedure. It has 2 hashtags namely

#giantskintagremoval and #electrocautery. The post has 14 comments and 6398 views. One comment asked the reason for skin tag and the doctor answered that it was due to hormonal influence, genetics and skin to skin rubbing. Another commented and asked if it was difficult to do skin tag removal in his mouth and the doctor replied that it was not.

Fifth post, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019: The post is on non surgical face lifting where the doctor posted three video clips of the clients getting the procedure. It has 5 hashtags such as #threadlift #nonsurgicalfacelifting #pdothreads #cogthread #threadliftmarionette. The post has 7 comments and 326 likes. One comment asked if it was painful to which the doctor replied it is not.

Sixth post, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019: The post is on lip fillers and enhancements where the doctor posted a video of the before and after picture slide of the procedure. It has 19 hashtags such as #lipfillers #lipenhancement #lipaugmentation #juvederm lipfillers #perfectlip #poutylips #beautifullips #dermafillers #juverdemsmile #lipfillersaizawl. It has 3215 views and 6 comments. One user asked if it was possible to do colour lip injection and the doctor replied it was possible. Another user asked the price of such a procedure and the doctor replied that 1 ml of medicine syringe costs Rs 22500 and that it would depend on how much was needed.

Seventh post, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019: The post is on smile line fillers where the doctor posted a 'before' and 'after' picture of her client. It has 7 hashtags namely #smilelinefillers #nasolabialfolds #nasolabialfiller #dermafillers #juvedermultra#dermafillerinjections #fillerinjectaizawl. The post has 4573 views.

Eighth post, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019: The post is on lip fillers where the doctor posted three videoclips of 'before' and 'after' pictures of her clients getting the procedure. The post has 10 hashtags such as #lipfiller #lipenhancements #lipaugmentationaizawl #juvedermultra3 #perfectlips #beautifullips #subtleenhancements #dermafillers #lipinjection #pout. The post has 13 comments and 253 likes. Most comments were on praises about the procedure.

Ninth post, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019: The post is on derma roller treatment where the doctor posted a video of one of her clients getting the procedure. The post has 8 hashtags namely #dermarollertreatment #dermarollingtreatment #microneedling #acnescartreatments #acnescarremoval #acnescartreatment #acnescarsolution. The post has 8456 views and 20 comments. One user asked if it was possible to remove dark skin spots and the doctor replied that it was possible. Another user asked if it would hurt and the doctor replied that for some procedure it hurts a little bit but worth the pain.

Tenth post, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019: The post is on acne scar removal where the doctor posted a video demonstration clip of the client getting the procedure. The post has 6 hashtagssuch as #scarsubcision #scartreatment #subcision #scarrevision #scarimprovement #scarremoval. It has 14 comments and 6499 views. One user asked if scars could be removed permanently to which the doctor replied that surgery would be necessary. Another

commented that it looked painful to which the doctor replied that she has administered anaesthesia so the patient did not feel any pain.

Eleventh post, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019: The post is on under eye fillers where the doctor posted two short video clips of 'before' and 'after' pictures of her clients getting the procedure. It has 12 hashtags such as #undereyefillers #teartroughjuvenation #teartroughfillers #teartroughs #undereyefiller #eyebags #undereyecorrections #undereyeaugmentation #voluma #juvedermfillers #fillersinjection #fillersaizawl. The post has 9 comments and 242 likes. Most comments were praises of the procedure and the doctor commented that the particular client came a little too late but 80 % of the eye bags could still be removed.

## **Findings**

The findings of the case study are analysed and coded into the following themes:

### **I. Instagram helps in creating awareness**

Most of the clients become aware of the different beauty procedures from the instagram account that the doctor uses. The doctor posts pictures and video clips of the 'before' and 'after' pictures or videos of the particular procedure used in the account. Most of the clients are attracted to such posts which eventually leads them to seek consultation with the doctor at her clinic and some times in the instagram accounts. The doctor also admitted that although such procedures have been performed even before social media, the level of awareness among clients increased tremendously after using social media to promote health and beauty procedures. The comment section in the instagram account also played a major role in connecting with the clients and potential clients. Users would comment and inquire about the procedure and the doctor would reply to them.

### **II. Popular skin treatment procedures**

For beautification, chemical peeling is the most common treatment, this may be because of the lower price but other treatments like nose-lifting, botox, filler etc are becoming more popular. Apart from usual procedures like chemical peel, electrocautery, radiofrequency ablation, derma-roller, excision and advanced procedures the doctor performs are botox, fillers, thread-lift and scar revision. Instagram helps in creating awareness about advanced procedures like botox, fillers, lip filling, nose-lift etc among the users. Women love to do chemical peel, botox, fillers on lip and nose as well as whitening treatments. While men love to do chemical peel, nose-lift and hair-fall treatments. Pros of botox: Botox fillers are semi-permanent, so if anything goes wrong it can be erased and can be repeated. It can be top-up anytime along with the natural ageing process. Cons: botox and fillers are not permanent and needs to be revised which costs more money.

### **III. Benefits and challenges of using instagram**

The benefits of using instagram in promoting health among health professionals are many. It helps in creating awareness among users with different problems. It helps users seek information regarding their interests in any particular procedure. It also provides trust among

users since the health professional discloses the contact details on the instagram account which make people trust the authenticity of the doctor. The doctor also makes sure that all the people featured on the instagram account are not clearly identified either by blurring certain parts of their faces or by censoring their eyes. The doctor also asked for their permission before posting their pictures or videos. This level of professionalism makes people trust the doctor more. The doctor also used hash tags in all her posts to create more awareness among users. If anyone searches the kind of skin problem or procedure they are interested in, these hash tags make it easily visible for them to find this particular doctor's feed on instagram.

The negative effects of using social media such as instagram by health professionals are felt more on the users rather than the professionals. Some users admit that they feel more insecure about their own looks when they see posts on instagram. This feeling of insecurity or inadequacy would eventually prompt them to seek professional help in terms of beauty treatments. Most of the beauty procedures such as botox, fillers, nose lifts and whitening are becoming more popular with clients who feel that their own natural faces do not meet the ideal images of beauty that they see so much on social media. Therefore, for some of the clients, social media puts more pressure on the way they look, giving them in order to achieve the 'ideal' beauty.

## **Conclusion**

The main objective of the case study is to find out the ways in which social media is being used by health professionals. The study has managed to find out that the particular health professional under study has used instagram effectively in promoting the business among clients. Instagram has proved to be beneficial in reaching out to potential clients and regular clients with the help of comments in the instagram account. On the flip side, it has also proven to have some negative effects on users in terms of feeling less adequate in their own looks which prompted them to seek medical help. This case study has been conducted in a short span of time for only four weeks so further research is definitely needed to learn more about the long term effects of using social media in promoting health or beauty treatments in Mizoram.

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