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Title

Short and Clear: YouTube Shorts Recommendations for Rosacea

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What is known about this subject with respect to women and their families?

Rosace is a common disease, estimated to affect over 16 million people in the United States including women. Rosacea is categorized into five subtypes (erythematotelangiectatic, papulopustular, phymatous, ocular, other variants), each associated with different treatment approaches. In an era where social media is increasingly used by patients as a source of health information, it is important to understand what treatment recommendations patients and their children may be receiving through these avenues.

What is new in this article with respect to women and their families?

Although previous studies have focused on YouTube and rosacea, none so far have done so using YouTube Shorts, a new short-form video platform only released as of March 2021. In this study, we conducted a cross-sectional analysis to assess what recommendations are suggested for rosacea in YouTube Shorts. The sparse number of YouTube Shorts videos on rosacea highlights the need for dermatologists to meet patients where they are to educate, combat misinformation, and maintain their status as experts in skin disease. Women, especially the younger demographic and teen girls tend to be a targeted audience for skincare videos.

Intro

A recent study found 87.6% of YouTube users used the platform to watch health-related content.¹ Thus, it is important to understand what health recommendations are being offered to the public, especially for common diseases such as rosacea,² a cutaneous disorder estimated to affect over 16 million people in the United States. Although previous studies have focused on YouTube and rosacea,³ none so far have done so using YouTube Shorts, a short-form video platform released in March 2021. We conducted a cross-sectional analysis to assess what recommendations are suggested for rosacea in YouTube Shorts.

Methods

On January 12, 2023, we searched YouTube.com for the following: *#shorts + rosacea treatment*. The search was sorted through YouTube by “relevance.” “Incognito mode” was used to minimize personal search algorithms influences. Author MK reviewed the first 150 YouTube Shorts videos to appear and excluded videos that were duplicates, not relevant, not in English, or had less than 1000 views.

Publicly available metrics were recorded, and an engagement value was determined by the following equation: $[(likes+comments)/views]x100$. Videos were categorized by creator type and recommendations were recorded.

Videos were categorized by the rosacea subtype the treatment was intended for (erythematotelangiectatic, papulopustular, phymatous, ocular, other variants).⁴

Recommendations were categorized by those that (1) can be carried out by patients independently, (2) require prescription or procedure, and (3) are home remedies.⁴ This study was modeled after research by Nickles et al 2021.⁵

Results

Of the 150 videos collected, only 40 met inclusion criteria with the majority (n=76) excluded because they were duplicates. The majority of videos featured dermatologists (65%), with the minority featuring skin care companies (5%)(Table 1). Most video creators were based in the US (65%), United Kingdom (15%), and India (10%), while the rest were based in Canada (5%), Korea (2.5%), and Malaysia (2.5%). The top recommendation mentioned by videos was laser or light therapy (32.50%)(Table 2). Many videos did not specify which rosacea subtype their recommendations were for (47.50%). Most videos (72.50%) had recommendations that can be carried out by patients independently, such as trigger avoidance, skincare habits, and over-the-counter medications. Examples of over-the-counter (OTC) medication included 10% azelaic acid

and skin products with heparan sulfate, hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, retinol, and vitamin C. Interestingly, 2 videos recommended using OTC nasal oxymetazoline spray, traditionally used as an intranasal decongestant, as a topical to vasoconstrict prominent telangiectatic vessels. Additionally, 5 videos mentioned using green-tinted cosmetics to disguise erythema. Less than half of the videos had recommendations requiring medical intervention including prescription medications, such as 15%-20% azelaic acid, topical metronidazole, and topical ivermectin, and in-office procedures such as laser and light therapy (42.50%). A minority of videos (15%) mentioned home remedies, such as topical pennywort, mugwort, argan oil, licorice extract, green tea, and skin care techniques, such as the use of ice rollers, ice globes, and ‘face cups.’

Comment

Short form social media content, including YouTube Shorts, is rapidly increasing in popularity. While many YouTube Shorts videos on rosacea had useful information, there were several that recommended treatments with questionable efficacy. This misinformation has the potential to cost patients money, time and prolong or worsen symptoms by causing delay in seeking care. The sparse number of YouTube Shorts videos on rosacea highlights the need for dermatologists to meet patients where they are to educate, combat misinformation, and maintain their status as experts in skin disease.

References

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Video speaker	N	%	Mean Views	Mean Likes	Mean Comments	Mean Engagement	Video specifies treatment for Erythematotelangiectatic Rosacea ***	Video specifies treatment for Phymatous Rosacea	Video with NO subtype specified	Recommend OTC medications or skincare products or lifestyle changes	Recommend prescription medication or procedure	Recommend home remedies
All	40		41,823	1,066	25.3	2.44%	20 (50%)	1 (2.5%)	19 (47.5%)	29 (72.5%)	17 (42.5%)	6 (15.0%)
Dermatologist*	26	65.00%	44,819	1,303	32,19230769	2.86%	15 (57.69%)	1 (3.85%)	10 (38.46%)	18 (69.23%)	12 (46.15%)	2 (7.69%)
Patient	8	20.00%	50,538	725	16	1.47%	2 (25.00%)	0 (0.00%)	6 (75.00%)	8 (100%)	3 (37.50%)	0
Skincare Group**	4	10.00%	5,100	73	7	1.54%	3 (75.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (25.00%)	2 (50%)	2 (50.00%)	0
Skincare Company	2	5.00%	41,450	1338	8	2.63%	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (100.00%)	2 (100%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (100%)
*21 featured US-based, board-certified physicians (confirmed by American Board of Medical Specialties website). 5 featured non-US dermatologists (self-reported).												
**Channels self-identified as skin, laser, and cosmetic dermatology group practices.												
*** Determined videos that mentioned "red," "flushing," or "telangiectasias".												

Table 1 | Descriptive characteristics of YouTube Shorts recommendations for rosacea.

Top 13 Recommendations for Rosacea on Youtube Shorts	# of videos with the recommendation	% of total videos
n = 40		
Lasers or light therapy	13	32.5%
Trigger Avoidance	9	22.5%
Skin care habits	7	17.5%
Sunscreen	7	17.5%
10% Azelaic Acid	6	15.0%
Green-tinted sunscreen or makeup	5	12.5%
Topical metronidazole	4	10.0%
Topical niacinamide	3	7.5%
Topical sulfur	3	7.5%
15% Azelaic Acid	2	5.0%
Topical Ivermectin	2	5.0%
Topical Niacinamide	2	5.0%
Topical Vitamin C	2	5.0%

*Examples of triggers included sugar, spicy foods, red wine, alcohol, coffee, extreme temperatures, sun, wind, emotions/stress, and extreme exercise.

*Examples of skin care habits included use of gentle cleansers and sunscreen.

Table 2 | Summary of the top 13 recommended rosacea treatments in the Youtube Short videos analyzed.