

Influence of Social Media Influencers Promoting DIY-Skincare in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Social media influencers have driven skincare procedures increasingly, especially in Pakistan, where consumers of Asian skin type are routinely exposed to DIY trends and cures. The purpose of the study was to acquire dermatologists' opinions on how social media influencers are affecting skincare practices in Pakistani individuals with Asian skin types

Methodology: This qualitative study analyzed dermatologists' perceptions of the impact of social media-driven skincare practice and disinformation surrounding home cures. Seven certified dermatologists took part in semi-structured interviews.

Findings: Findings of the study shows that showed that DIY beauty routines, unauthorized procedures, and kitchen-based therapies often lead to skin damage and complicate professional care. There is a silence in public understanding since most dermatologists do not use social media for disseminating accurate information.

Conclusion: The study concluded that the public is greatly influenced by popular DIY skincare trends on social media, which frequently favor accessible and affordable solutions above expert treatment. Dermatologists have repeatedly stated that these behaviors cause negative skin responses, particularly when they are endorsed by influencers and non-experts. To better protect the public skin health, results stress the need for controls of influencer-driven skincare content to be stricter, coupled with expert-led digital education.

Keywords: Social Media, Influencers, DIY Home Remedies, Skin, Skincare.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The skin is the body's largest organ, and though it plays a vital role in a person's survival, health, and wellbeing, the way the skin appears, feels, and is perceived by others can also affect a person's self-esteem and social acceptance (Kottner & Surber, 2016). Humans have been doing some form of "skincare" from the time of birth to death, whether it is washing or bathing or using some type of beauty product to care for their skin (Blanco-Davila, 2000). There are many factors that affect how a person cares for their skin, including the individual's personal preferences and beliefs, their culture and where they live, how they have access to hygiene-related facilities (such as public baths), the level of information available about skin care, technological advances, and marketing practices (Fotoh et al., 2008).

1.1 Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms have dramatically altered the way patients and professionals share, access, and perceive dermatological information. With over 5 billion users worldwide, these virtual platforms currently play a major role in disease management, treatment decisions, and patient expectations. The following paper reviews the evolving relationship between dermatology and social media, how it influences skin diseases, how it may serve to enhance care, and identifies the key challenges facing dermatologists today (Rey & Tan, 2025; Safdar & Eman, 2025). Medical professionals and laypersons are key content generators, with patients preferring simpler vocabulary and doctors maintaining or reverting to specialized terms (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022). Patients and physicians, as well as companies, spread dermatologic communication on multiple different platforms including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter. For example, a TikTok investigation revealed the top 150 videos with the hashtag #acne had 102 million followers and nearly 2 billion views (Lyenger *et al.*, 2025). An online research study revealed that 75% of psoriasis patients used Facebook monthly while 72% of those sought information (Schuster *et al.*, 2020). Age-related differences in communication and engagement also have an impact on the online presence of dermatology. Social media has created a generational divide between traditional experts, who are defined by their academic credentials, and influencers, whose authority is a product of their online presence (Labadie *et al.*, 2024). The wealth of dermatologic content on social media threatens information integrity, as unsupported claims may be rapidly magnified through media algorithms. Analyses reveal concerning trends: YouTube videos regarding allergic contact dermatitis, for example, often contain incorrect medical information. By means of "skinfluencers", these trends are available to millions, whose followership dwarfs that of respected dermatology organizations by orders of magnitude (Trepanowski & Grant-Kels, 2023). These social media algorithms create filter bubbles that support the already held opinions of users and reject all others, creating isolated echo chambers that make it hard for medical experts to correct the misinformation (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2024). Examples of such alternative "treatments" and homemade formulations that are proclaimed to be "natural" for skin cancer include baking soda and cider vinegar. Often, these concoctions contain potentially dangerous plant chemicals that have never been tested for safety or may interfere with clinically proven treatments, such as black salve or St. John's wort (O'Connor *et al.*, 2022).

1.2 Related with SDG 3: Good Health and Well being

Out of the 17 SDGs, SDG 3 GOOD HEALTH & WELL BEING is the primary SDG most relevant to this study. The third SDG aims to "ensure a healthy life and promote well-being for all at all ages." (United Nations Statistics Division., 2016). It thus aims to ensure access to safe, affordable medicines and vaccines for all, along with universal health coverage. This calls for increased investment in health systems to support countries in recovering and building resilience against future health threats, thereby overcoming these challenges hand in hand with longstanding deficiencies in health care (United Nations, 2025). A survey found that paramedics and medical workers in private hospitals support the utilization of social media for raising awareness and providing health care education. It is considered a very useful tool to reduce the burden of diseases within Pakistan. Results of the study further revealed that young medical professionals use social media more, and they also advocate the making of laws which encourage it, while at the same time establishing a monitoring system to avoid the spreading of false information (Munir & Ahmed, 2025).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A recently conducted survey revealed that paramedics and medical workers in private hospitals favor using social media to raise awareness and provide health care education. It is considered an effective tool for reducing the disease burden of Pakistan. The research also unveiled its results, which pointed out that young medical professionals would, most probably, be social media users, and they believe in the legislation for the promotion of the same with a monitoring system to prevent false information (Boen & Jerdan, 2022). It also noted that only 38% of the popular dermatology-related Instagram accounts are run

by medical professionals, while a mere 4% are controlled by board-certified dermatologists. Many of these influencers have no qualifications and tout unsafe or untested treatments (Ranpariya *et al.*, 2020). Dermatologists should all have a social media presence to help counter misinformation with credible and evidence-based medical information. What's more, they want to know how digital platforms are related to healthcare (Braunberger *et al.*, 2022). Social media enable information to reach many people quickly, but it can be easier to find false information than the truth because many third parties might change or misconstrue facts (Vosoughi *et al.*, 2018). Social media can give dermatologists access to provide education to the public, combat misinformation, and improve patient's understanding of dermatologic conditions. One study conducted within an outpatient dermatology clinic showed that patients depend on their physicians for information, but also 69% considered the internet a valuable source for medical information (AlGhamdi & Almohideb, 2011). With social media becoming increasingly popular, a greater number of the population now has quick access to wellness and skincare information; most of this is provided by non-licensed social media stars. Consequently, social media has begun to influence users' choices regarding skincare, mostly for women and teenagers. It is important to realize that every skin condition is different, just as each of us has various skincare needs (Begum, 2024).

By our data, 78.6% of the patients with acne vulgaris use social media and the internet for learning more about their condition. It is much more frequent in males rather than females, and among youth, teenagers, single ones, and in the first two years after the illness starts. It is important to raise the patients' awareness about the dangers of social media, the side effects of the intake of medications without a prescription or doctor's advice. The doctors also have to use social media and internet research more because the internet and social media contain a lot of fake information regarding Acne Vulgaris disease, which has negative impacts, especially on the skin (Ünal *et al.*, 2024). YouTube videos on skincare and acne treatment are often incorrect and of low information quality, thus having the potential to mislead viewers (Borba *et al.*, 2020). Examples of such social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, where individuals can share their ideas, recommendations, and personal experiences about health (Naslund *et al.*, 2014). These sites have some very misleading information on them but they also host some great patient support groups. Very little scientific evidence supports "natural" cures, dietary supplements, or alternative therapies that are promoted by individuals with large followings of admirers or who have not attended medical school. The problem is compounded by the ease with which material on the social networking sites can rapidly spread due to users sharing. Misleading information of this sort often works against evidence-based medical advice (McKay, 2021) DIY home remedies are simpler and cheaper, according to published papers from 2007-2023, because they use materials that are readily available in the environment. Social media, ancient cultural values, and a reduced fear of chemicals damaging the skin have also contributed to its significant rise. A number of known benefits, which include the discoloration side effects of citrus in these preparations, have been outweighed by more severe adverse effects of DIY skincare such as phytophotodermatitis and sunburn induced by a change in the skin pH and interaction with UV rays. Aloe vera gel provides hydration, antibacterial, and antifungal properties but creates some adverse effects due to the presence of aloin, which is mainly developed because of the compromised purity of the material during processing. Some procedures, such as over-exfoliating with sugar and applying toothpaste on acne, are never good for one's skin because they badly damage the skin barrier and lead to inflammation, scabs, and scars (Lalchand & Joseph, 2023). Most selected a homemade beauty remedy due to the easy accessibility of products, low cost, and by following established practices of ancient beauty secrets in which they would find to be effective. However, while the ingredients in homemade beauty care are the same vitamins of manufactured beauty products their effectiveness may be weakened by the lack of preservatives and the unidentified quantity of active ingredients placed on the skin. Professional-grade beauty care is suitable for numerous skin types and often eliminates common allergic reactions. The medications that are accessible in your homes have not gone through clinical trials for topical administration may cause an acne flare up or a rash.

2.1 Problem Statement

Social media influencers, particularly those for Asian skin types, are highly influencing Pakistani skincare practices. Dermatologists treat local skin diseases, which is quite challenging due to the lack of scientific basis for many trends. The paucity of studies concerning the effects of influencer-driven skincare on dermatological health signifies further study is required in this subject.

2.2 Research Gaps

The first gap the researcher found is that dermatology is the only medical sector in Pakistan which non-professionals debate on social media, but they seldom ever criticize the false information these influencers share about skincare trends or home cures. Second, there is a large body of literature and a geographical vacuum in the current studies because no dermatological specialists in Pakistan have ever provided data. After the second research gap, the third one is how dermatologists view false information on social media either as a product or as a home cure.

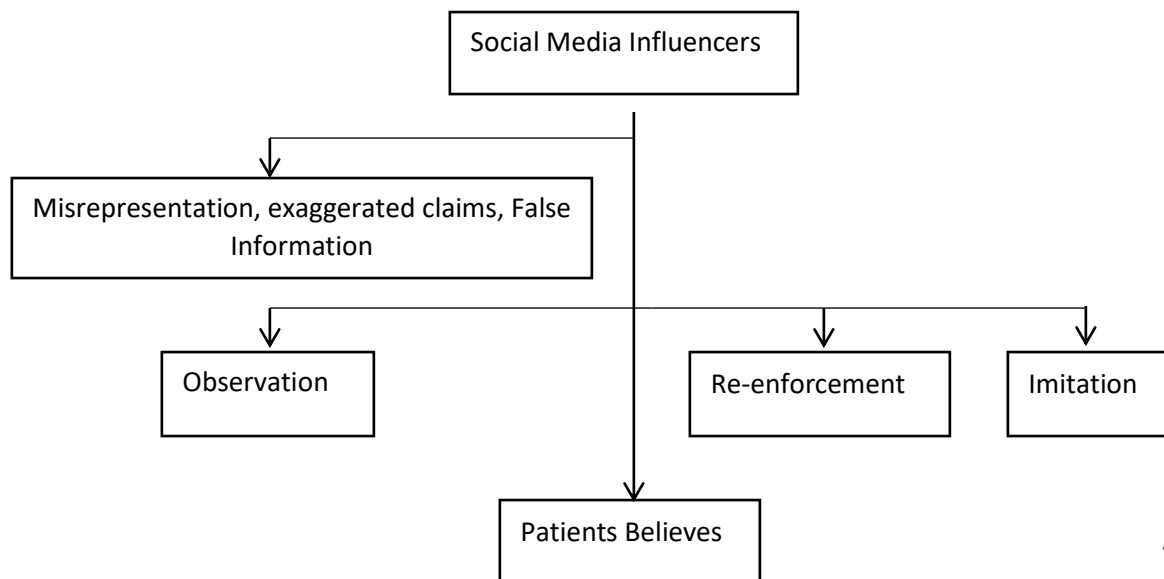
2.3 Study Objectives

- The purpose of the study was to acquire dermatologists' opinions on how social media influencers are affecting skincare practices in Pakistani individuals with Asian skin types.
- To understand the challenges faced by dermatologists in treating patients who are influenced by DIY skincare tips because of social media.
- To comprehend dermatologists' viewpoints about whether influencer-driven skincare trends are suited for Pakistani skin types.
- To understand dermatologists' outlooks on how social media and influencers shape public perception and expectations about skin care.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

According to Bingham & Conner (2010), a "social learning theory" was first put forward in 1954, expanding on the work of John Dewey and drawing on the new sciences of psychology, behavior modification, and sociology to understand and shape behavior. Later learning theorists, including Albert Bandura, who stated in 1977, "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention dangerous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own behaviors to inform them what to do," drew on ideas from social learning theory. Thankfully, most human behavior is visible and can be modeled. The new social learning utilizes social networking, media communication, small-scale content discussion, and immersive environments to expose people to ideas in short chunks, when it works best for their workflow, without a significant learning curve, and in a way that more closely resembles live group interactions.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The viral effects of material provided by social media influencers can be understood using the concept of social learning. The social learning theory posits that individuals acquire attitudes and behaviors by observing others, especially those they perceive as role models; this concept has been useful to the researcher with regard to its work. Role models are likely to be influential persons on social media. They build public perception about skincare through imitation, reinforcement, and observational learning. When social media users see influencers with flawless skin using certain products, they may think that they, too, are using the same products and obtaining the exact results. A majority of social media users blindly copy the celebrities' DIY skin care recipes and skincare tips. Misrepresentations of do-it-yourself hacks through modification and filters mislead followers. Burns, skin sensitivity, and long-term damage result from several operations.

3. Methodology

The approach taken in this study is holistic, carefully crafted to explore the effects of social media influencers on skin health, specifically for people with Asian dermatological conditions in Pakistan. This approach consider the type and nature of the research, the sampling strategy, the data collection method, and the extent of empirical analysis required. The methods applied are described as follows.

3.1 Research Type

In this study, the qualitative research-based method was applied, which is most appropriate for analyzing dermatologists' opinions, personal interaction, and understanding of how social media influencers are impacting skin care regimens among the population with Asian skin types throughout Pakistan by disseminating false information on skin home remedies. Qualitative research allows us to garner rich understanding of the various social procedures and personal views that might be ignored using quantitative methodologies.

3.2 Research Design

In-depth interviews with dermatologists explore professional insights and experiences related to influencer-led skincare trends. Such a qualitative method will contribute to the process of identifying causes, problems, and consequences related to skincare habits influenced by social media. The researchers gathered rich, in-depth insight into topics that are difficult or impossible to examine with survey methods alone.

3.3 Study Area and Target Population

The research focused on dermatologists in metropolitan Pakistan, specifically Lahore, to understand how social media influencers affect skincare practices. Insight from private clinics enlightening on the challenges healthcare practice faces due to trends driven by influencers.

3.4 Sampling Design and Sample Size

Purposive sampling was used in this qualitative study to select a sample of eleven dermatologists with expertise in Asian skin types and current social media-influenced skincare trends from urban Pakistan, mostly Lahore. Participants from academic institutions, public hospitals, and private clinics will reflect a variation in perspectives. The sample size is sufficient to accomplish data saturation, where no new subjects would emerge from additional interviews. This strategy is efficient for gaining in-depth insight into the consequences of the skincare practices induced by influencers.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

The approach to data collection for this qualitative study is mainly based on semi-structured interviews, which are rich and detailed. It fits well in exploring the thoughts of dermatologists, their experiences, and observations regarding how social media influencers influence skincare habits of Pakistani people with Asian skin types.

4. FINDINGS & RESULTS

Seven licensed dermatologists currently practicing in Pakistan were interviewed to get their take on social media misinformation about skin health for derma health. Each had 5–20+ years of clinical experience.

Theme 1: Appealing of general public towards DIY Skincare

General public or mostly household's women are getting more influenced by the promoting fake procedure at home like skin home remedies which is very appealing to them due to its easy access or cheap solutions, one dermatologist (D6) said that

“whatever is free for the public, they will go for that, free advice is always appealing to all. When it comes to our health, we became so stupid that we give 100 of the chances to those ridiculous procedures rather than visiting a doctor”.

Theme 2: Harmful DIY trends by social media influencers

DIY means DO IT YOURSELF! A procedure which is recommended and done within the supervision of experts are more likely to safe and healthy. Dermatologists (D4, D3, D1) elaborates with her keen interest that

“Most of the patient use lemons, chickpea flour and raw aloe vera on their face which irritate their skin and make their acne more cystic”.

The other dermatology mentioned the purpose of DIY skin content by saying “these all are the practices of our ancestors which may suitable for some skin types or may not”. He (D7) also (D4) mentioned

“some of the trends like bleaching skin at home with acidic solutions and creams got over the extent level of worsens skincare. It should not at practice at all”.

Theme 3: DIY Skincare caused skin damage in patients

Mostly all the participant dermatologists agreed that there is a lot of mess in using DIY Trends just because it's a cheap way to treat their skin. Many patients use toothpaste to calms their acne or use medical treatments in self-medication way which is properly influenced by the non-experts rather its on social media or not. One dermatologist (D4) mentioned the experience of his patient by saying

“Kitchen-based treatments and unsupervised procedures worsen dermatological conditions in many patients”

A dermatology (D2) shares her experience of treating patient that;

“I prescribed the medicines for the man who was suffering from bald patches on the scalp which cause hair loss, but he went to a man specifically from social media who offers him a herbal treatment even with more expense but within 3 months he came back to me with more concerns about scalp issues”. Then she brief this explanation by mentioning “it goes same with the skin patients whenever they use social media they immediately influenced by the below average knowledge of these influencers”

Theme 4: Kitchen Ingredients Shared by Influencers

One of the highly experienced dermatologist (D1) said that;

“I don't know whats the purpose of using kitchen things on face, except it can only be used for eat or consume”.

Moreover, she added

“Many patients use garlic for their skin patches on their scalp but it leads to getting more dangerous results. It develops contact eczema and inflammatory skin

conditions. Any raw material from the nature should not be applied to directly on the face, it must be purified and suitable for your skin”.

Theme 5: Dermatologist actions on social media platforms

3 out of 7 dermatologists share awareness on social media but with slow speed about skincare and how to prevent any dermatological myths, rest of the dermatologists refuse to take any platform to discuss such information because of their tough and rough routines. Only D2, D3 & D6 have taken of spreading awareness on social media platforms.

5. DISCUSSIONS

The results show that social media-driven DIY skincare has a significant impact on Pakistani consumers, particularly women, because of its affordability and accessibility. According to dermatologists, risky behaviors that frequently result in skin damage and obstruct appropriate therapy include at-home microneedling, amateur facials, and the use of household materials. Driven by false information from non-experts, patients also abuse medical procedures or depend on toothpaste as an acne remedy. Influencers on social media often push dangerous skincare trends and lack medical knowledge. Due to time constraints, few dermatologists actively disseminate instructional materials online, creating a void in expert advice. Overall, the findings emphasize the dangers of do-it-yourself skincare, the experts' limited ability to address issues, and the necessity of raising awareness of and regulating detrimental influencer-promoted practices.

Table 1: *Study Themes with description, number of dermatologists and interpretation*

Theme	Description	Dermatologist n=7 (Agreed)	Interpretation
Appealing of General Public	Due to the fact that home remedies and influencer suggestions seem easy and cheap, people tend to prefer them to going to a dermatologist. That pull is so strong that lots of folks rely on unproven treatments without realizing the possible consequences.	7/7	All the Participant dermatologist agreed on the appealing of general public that mostly people do their medication at home without knowing the side effects. Moreover, they added it is part of our ancestors DIY trends seems so available and affordable on social media than any medical procedure.
Harmful DIY's	Influencers often promote unsafe DIY skincare practices, encouraging people to perform procedures. These trends are risky because they lack medical guidance and can lead to infections, scarring, or long-term skin damage.	5/7	Harmful DIY trends are always be on social media perhaps it is new home remedy or new procedure,
Skin Damage	Influencers push people to try out some really risky DIY skincare stuff. Without medical advice and with a real chance of infections, scars, or long-term skin damage, these	7/7	Dermatologist agreed that mostly patients came towards them after disturbing their skin by the influence of social media influencers.

	trends are very dangerous.		
Kitchen Ingredients	Most people believe that turmeric, lemon, honey, aloe vera, yogurt, or even baking soda are shortcuts to get rid of pigmentation, acne, or glowing skin. Dermatology research, however, often doesn't support the application of these natural things directly to the skin, despite some useful properties in them.	4/7	4 out of 7 dermatologist said, using the kitchen ingredients on the skin can cause contact dermatitis, inflammatory infections and pigmentation. Influencers promote their home remedies by the kitchen ingredients like chickpea flour, its better not to follow.
Dermatologist Actions	Dermatologists discuss popular DIY skin fixes, debunk goofy skincare myths, and warn about the danger of chasing sketchy influencer tips in film, article, and live chat formats. They are pretty much a trusted reality check, offering some seriously solid, science-backed information to keep everyone on the right track with their skin health.	3/7	Only 3 Dermatologist Actively take action on the false content of these social media influencers but share awareness with a very slow speed.

The results of this study directly support the findings of a previous study conducted in 2023 by Lalchand & Joseph which found that most people preferred self-made skincare treatments because they were readily available, inexpensive, and adhered to cultural norms of ancient beauty secrets, which they found to be effective. Although the substances in homemade skincare products are similar to the vitamins found in commercial beauty products, their potency may be diminished due to the absence of preservatives and the unknown amount of useful compounds applied to the skin. Those sites include a lot of misleading information, but they also have some excellent patient support groups. There is little scientific backing for "natural" cures, dietary supplements, and alternative therapies promoted by individuals with large fan bases or those who have not attended medical school. The speed with which information on social media may swiftly gain popularity through user sharing exacerbates the problem. Real, evidence-based medical advice is frequently hampered by this misinformation (McKay, 2021). Dermatology faces possibilities and difficulties on social media that need for careful, calculated navigation. Digital platforms have the potential to spread knowledge around the world, but they also run the danger of spreading false information and harming people with visible skin diseases. At the same time, they provide new avenues for involvement and education as well as beneficial support networks (Tan and Rey, 2025).

6. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the public is greatly influenced by popular DIY skincare trends on social media, which frequently favor accessible and affordable solutions above expert treatment. Dermatologists have repeatedly stated that these behaviors cause negative skin responses, particularly when they are endorsed by influencers and non-experts. Many patients' dermatological issues are made worse by unsupervised operations and kitchen-based therapies. To safeguard the public's skin health, expert-led digital awareness must be strengthened and false information must be discouraged. While only three out of seven dermatologists have utilized social media to raise awareness about skin health, nearly all of the dermatologists surveyed reported being impacted by DIY trends on social media.

6.1 Limitations

Thus, this study was based on only seven dermatologists, and therefore might not catch all the different clinical judgments of Pakistan. The findings are based on self-report interview data, which might be biased.

6.2 Ethical Consideration

Before the interviews began, all dermatologists were aware of the goal of the study and consciously chose to participate. To prevent anyone from identifying them, their names and personal information were kept confidential. Every piece of information gathered was secure and utilized exclusively for this study.

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