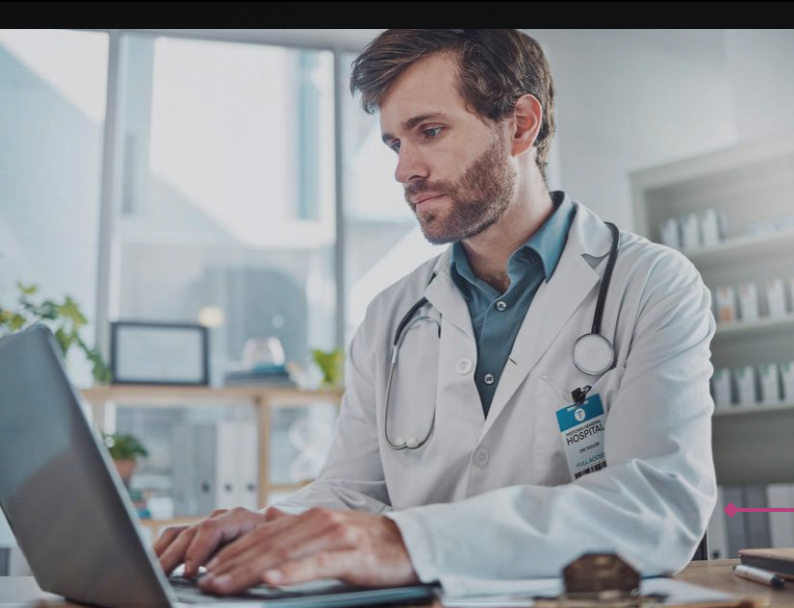


How are HCP Key Opinion Leaders influencing the patient journey?

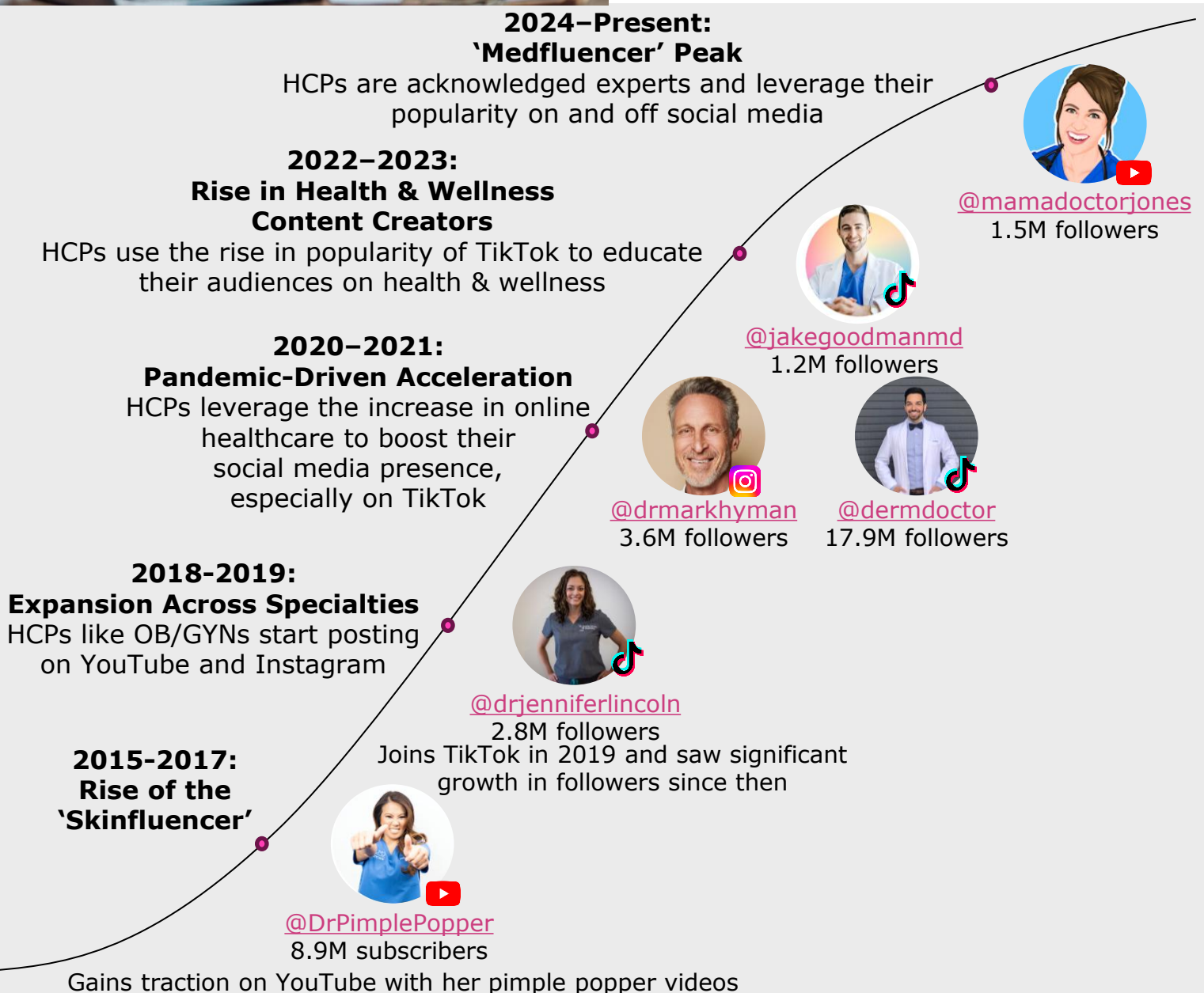
An analysis of spontaneous conversations about health care practitioners who are Key Online Influencers (KOIs) on social media, forums, and blogs in the US (2023 – YTD July 2025)



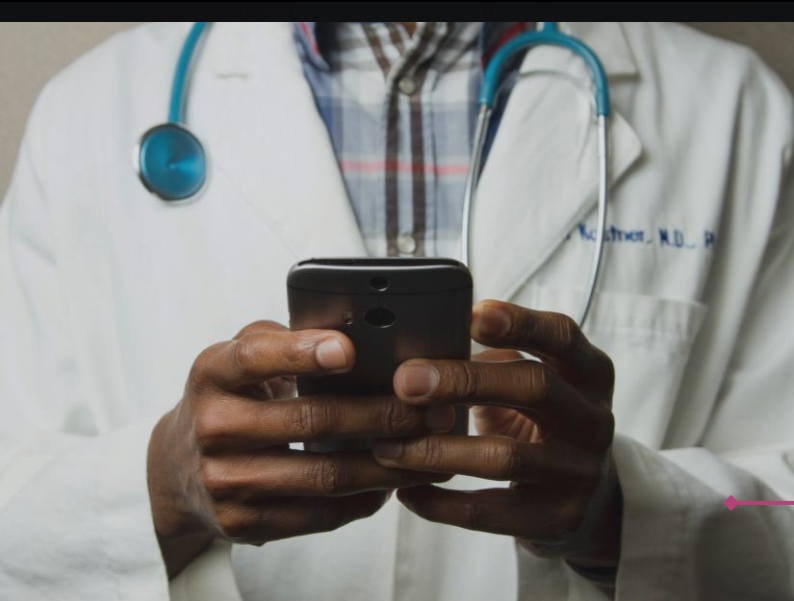
The Trend



The growth in HCP KOIs is an evolutionary process, influenced by COVID, the widespread usage of telemedicine, and the growing influence of TikTok



Where Patients Interact



Patients who want to interact with HCPs use a plethora of platforms



Reddit

- Patients engage through **community-driven discussions** in **topic-specific subreddits**
- They see it as **a safe space since it is anonymous**, and ask questions, share personal experiences, and seek peer advice and expert input
- **Top subreddits:** [r/medical](#), [r/MedicalHelp](#), [r/DoctorsAdvice](#)



TikTok

- Patients follow HCP KOIs on TikTok through **short videos that combine education with entertainment as a quick means of learning relevant information in a fun and accessible format**
- HCP KOIs use hashtags like [#doctorsoftiktok](#), [#medicalinfluencer](#), [#medinfluencer](#), [#doctorinfluencer](#), [#askadentist](#)



Instagram

- Patients engage with HCP KOIs on Instagram for their **relatable, visual storytelling, making complex health topics easier to understand** and more **trustworthy**
- HCP KOIs use hashtags like [#doctorsofinstagram](#), [#medicaleducation](#), [#medschool](#), [#healthcareprofessional](#)



YouTube

- Patients follow HCP KOIs on YouTube for **long-form educational videos, tutorials, and Q&A sessions**
- **Top YouTube channels:** [Dr. Kara](#), [Doc Willie Ong](#), [Medlife Crisis](#)

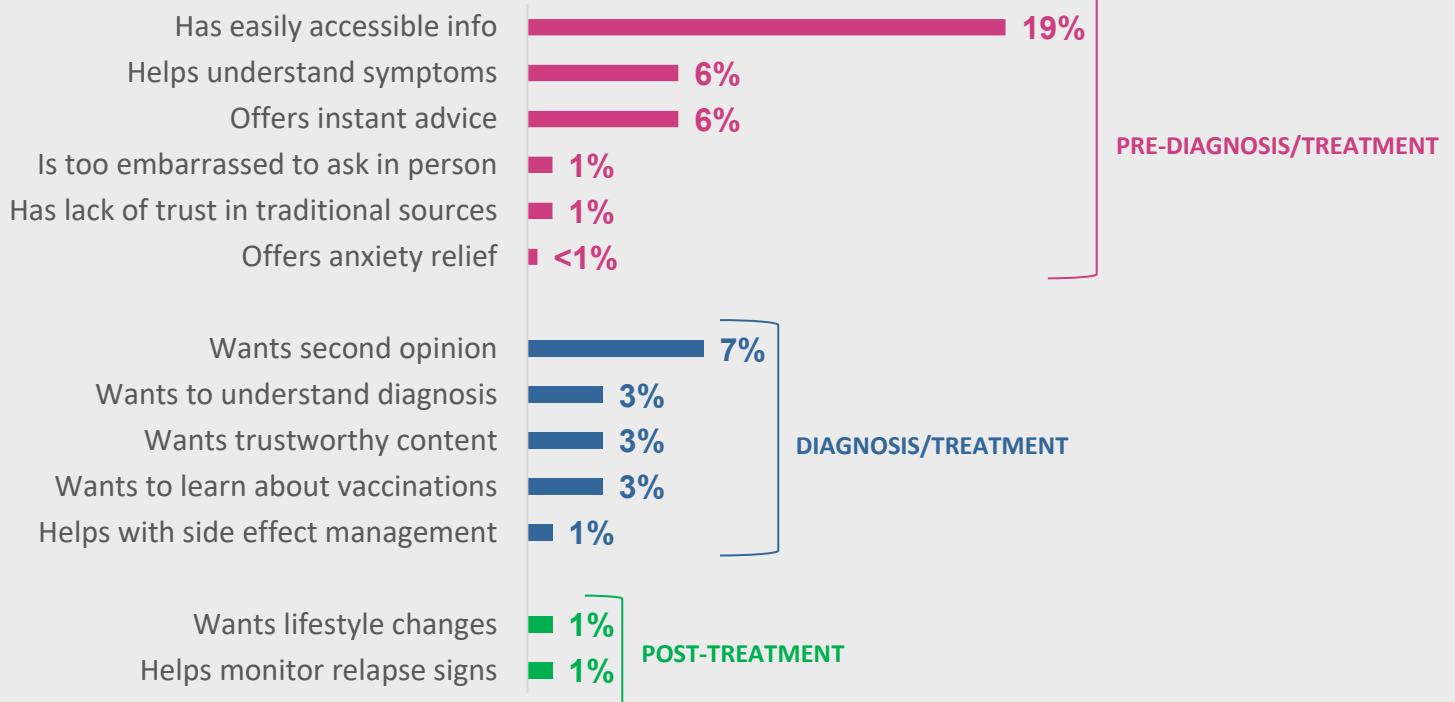
Motivations



Patients turn to these HCP KOIs at every step of their journey, with both rational and emotional bases that drive their motivations

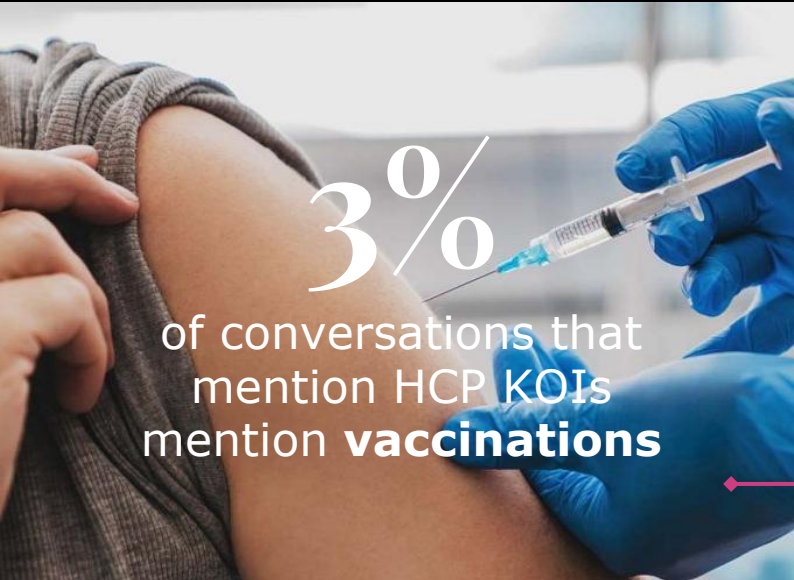
Top mentioned motivations

% of conversation that mention HCP KOIs in the US (2023- YTD July 2025)



“ A lot of people have been **asking me what my symptoms are** so here you go! **Let me know if any of you struggle with some of these.** #chronicillness #symptoms #myjourney

Deep Dive on Vaccinations



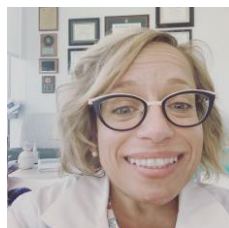
Post-COVID, pro-vax patients turn to HCP KOIs for vaccine info, immune system insights, and guidance on vaccine misinformation



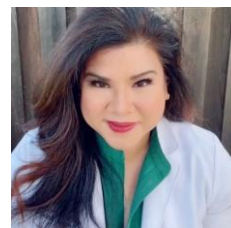
Since the advent of **COVID-19**, pro-vax patients have increasing reliance on HCP KOIs **providing information pertaining to vaccinations**

Initially, patients were **primarily interested in the COVID-19 vaccine**, but have shown growing interest in other vaccines, including the **measles vaccine, the flu vaccine, and the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) vaccine**

HCP KOIs share **general information on immunology** too, including **how the immune system works, vaccine side effects, and disinformation** pertaining to vaccines



 [@jenarnoldmd](#)
1.7M followers



 [@drstellac](#)
71K followers

Areas of Expertise

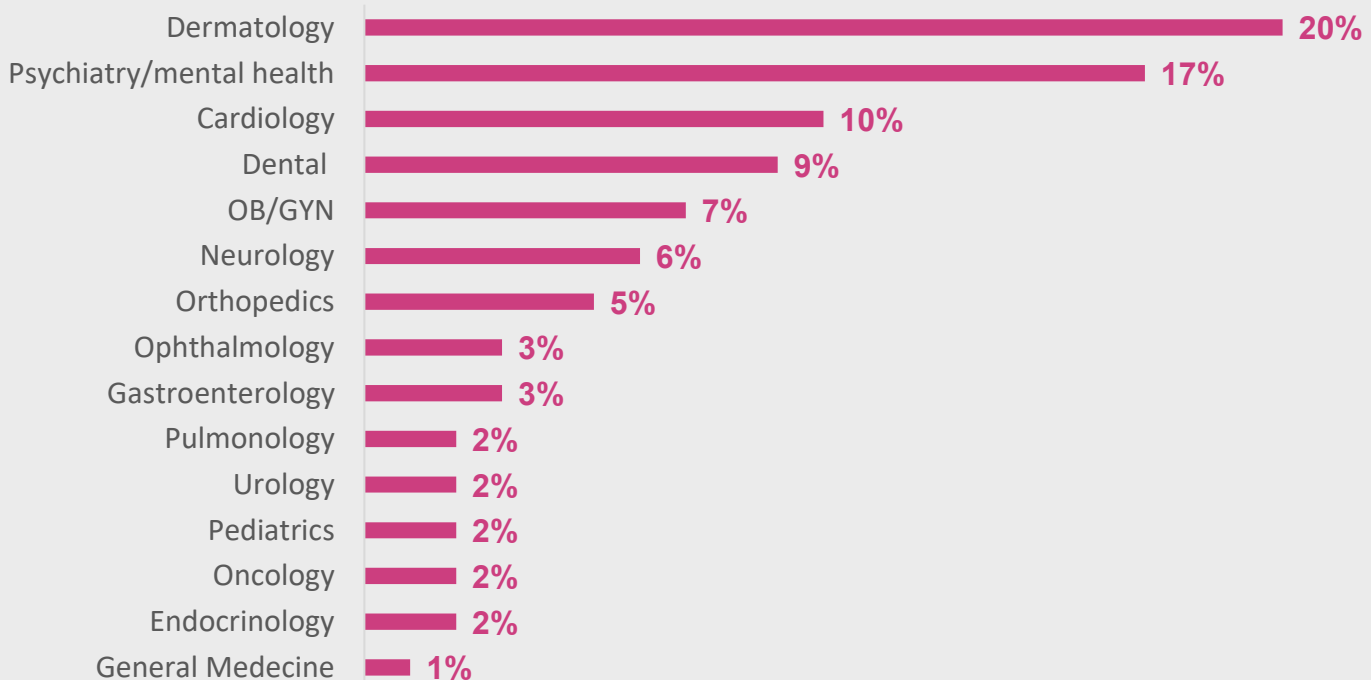
78%

of conversations that mention HCP KOIs mention areas of expertise

Patients turn to HCP KOIs in specialized areas of expertise to ask specific questions

Top mentioned areas of expertise

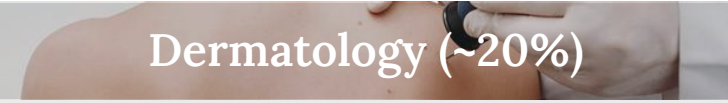
% of conversation that mention HCP KOIs in the US (2023- YTD July 2025)



“

What's on your skin? #dermdoctor A flaky, red rash by the corner of the nose, in the eyebrows, behind the ears, or in the scalp is commonly **seborrheic dermatitis**. (...) If that doesn't work, see your dermatologist, we have stronger medication!

Areas of Expertise: Top health specialties



Dermatology (~20%)

- Patients seek out aid from HCP KOIs due to the **easily accessible information** and **instant medical advice**
- These consumers struggle with **moderate to severe conditions**
- Conditions **include** diagnosed conditions like **acne, rosacea, psoriasis and eczema** or symptoms like **itchiness, bumps, scaly skin, and rashes**
- Patients are usually in the **pre-diagnosis** and **active treatment** phases



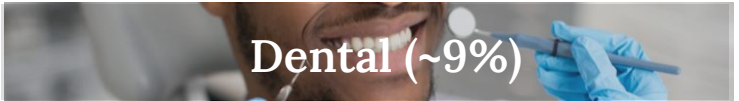
Psychiatry/Mental Health (~17%)

- Patients turn towards psychiatric KOIs as they feel that they can **offer help in understanding their symptoms** and **potential treatment**
- Conditions include **anxiety disorder, depression, ADHD, PTSD**, and **burnout/work related stress**
- Condition **severity is usually low**
- Patients are usually in **pre diagnosis and active treatment phases**, trying to determine what mental condition they may be struggling with



Cardiology (~10%)

- Patients that rely on cardiologist KOIs are motivated by **a want to understand their diagnosis and to ease anxiety**
- Conditions they seek out info on include **high blood pressure, cholesterol, and even heart attack or heart failure**
- Actual medical concerns tend to be **low severity**
- Patients are typically in the **pre-diagnosis stage and active treatment phases**



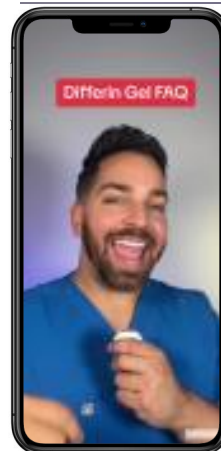
Dental (~9%)

- Patients that depend on dental KOIs are motivated by the **affordable guidance they provide** and **the ease in fear of seeing dentists in person**
- Conditions include **teeth sensitivity, bleeding gums, cosmetic concerns** (whitening, braces), and **preventative care**
- Condition **severity is diverse**, ranging from low to severe
- **Patients are also in all stages of treatment**

Areas of Expertise: Top questions

Dermatology (~20%)

- What is causing my acne?
- What is this rash on me?
- Are there any at home treatments?
- How do I reduce itchiness?
- Best psoriasis treatments?
- What are the best eczema products?



“ ACNE 101: @differinus
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Psychiatry/Mental Health (~17%)

- Do I have anxiety/depression/etc.?
- What medication is best for my anxiety?
- How do I find a qualified therapist?
- Can I manage this without meds?
- How can I deal with burnout?



“ If I have anxiety, why am I taking an antidepressant??
Great question!

Cardiology (~10%)

- What can I do about high blood pressure?
- What are heart disease symptoms?
- How can I manage my cholesterol?
- What do my test results mean?
- Can you explain my calcium score?



“ I get so many questions on calcium score tests and who should get them.
#heartdisease
#cardiology

Dental (~9%)

- Do I need to get this checked?
- How can I reduce cavity risk?
- Best teeth whitening remedies?
- Is DIY dental care safe?
- Why are my teeth so sensitive?
- Good dental implant prep?



“ 6 questions to ask your implant dentist
#askthedentist

Deep dive on pregnancy

16%

of conversations that mention HCP KOIs mention **pregnancy**

Pregnant patients rely on **OB/GYN KOIs and other HCPs** for fast, accessible guidance on prenatal care, nutrition, labor, and fetal development



Pregnant patients rely on **OB/GYN KOIs and other experts** as a **fast and accessible source** of information

Content they seek out from OB/GYNs include:

- **Prenatal care guidance** – checkups, ultrasounds, tests, and managing pregnancy symptoms
- **Labor and delivery information** – birth plans, pain management, and what to expect during delivery
- **Fetal development updates** – growth milestones, movement, and health monitoring

Content they seek out from other experts include:

- **Nutrition and lifestyle advice** – diet, exercise, and safe activities during pregnancy



@alirodm

1.7M followers



@mamadoctorjones

1.2M followers

Top KOIs

Dermatology (~20%)



@dermdoctor
17.9M followers



@drpimplepopper
16.9M followers



@shereeneidriss
1.4M followers

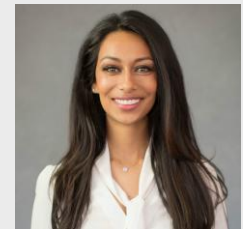
Psychiatry/Mental Health (~17%)



@drjulie
4.9M followers

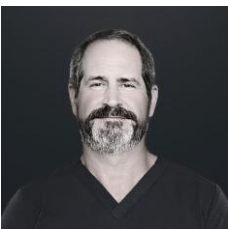


@jakegoodmanmd
1.2M followers

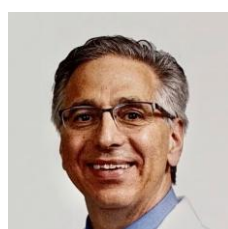


@thepsychdoctormd
928K followers

Cardiology (~10%)



@drjeremylondon
615K followers



@drevanlevine
255K followers

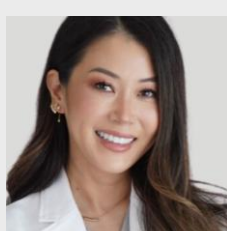


@drmohammedalo
239K followers

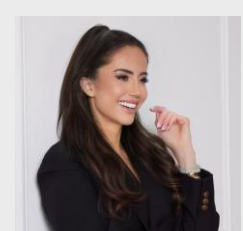
Dental (~9%)



@thebentist
15.6M followers



@joycethedentist
514K followers



Drninafacialsculpting
359K followers

Dermatology

Dr. Muneeb Shah



 [@dermdoctor](https://www.tiktok.com/@dermdoctor)

 [@doctorly](https://www.instagram.com/@doctorly)

 [@doctorly](https://www.youtube.com/@doctorly)

Dr. Shah is a **board-certified dermatologist** who's made a major impact on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube:

- TikTok (his biggest platform) content includes **short, punchy videos** using formats like **green-screen, duets, and direct-to-camera responses**
- He often responds to **trending skincare videos** or **viral products**—**reacting to misinformation** and **verifying trends** in real time and helps **simplify routines**
- His **biggest pitfall** are his **frequent product partnerships** (Neutrogena, La Roche Posay)
- In terms of media presence, he is a frequent guest on the **podcast [Gloss Angeles](#)**, and has contributed to media outlets like **Vogue** and **Women's Health**

Psychiatry/Mental Health

Dr. Jake Goodman



Dr. Jake Goodman is a **psychiatry resident** known for using social media to raise awareness about mental health:

- TikTok (also his biggest platform) content includes **trend-based formats** (green-screen direct-to-camera) to **connect with Gen Z** and **destigmatize mental health**
- He mixes **educational posts, personal stories**, and **trending audio formats** to fight stigma
- His **best practices** include normalizing **vulnerability** by **sharing his own mental health journey** and encouraging community dialogue
- His **biggest pitfall** is that some view his content as "**performative vulnerability**" in influencer medicine
- His media presence includes being a **two-time TEDx speaker** and being featured on **Men's Health, NBC, Today.com**, and **Good Morning America**

 [@jakegoodmanmd](https://www.tiktok.com/@jakegoodmanmd)

 [@jakegoodmanmd](https://www.instagram.com/@jakegoodmanmd)

 [@jakegoodmanmd](https://www.youtube.com/@jakegoodmanmd)

Brands Mapping

3%

of conversations posted by HCP KOIs mention **brands, mostly organically**

Dermatology

Rx

Retin-A[®] Cream
(tretinoin) 0.05%

BOTOX[®]
onabotulinumtoxinA injection

Winlevi[®]
(clascoterone) cream 1%

OTC

Amoxicillin

DIFFERIN[®]

CeraVe[®]
DEVELOPED WITH DERMATOLOGISTS

Eucerin[®]

Psychiatry/Mental Health

Rx

Zoloft[®]
(sertraline HCl)

Wellbutrin XL[®]
bupropion HCl 150 mg, 300 mg
EXTENDED-RELEASE TABLETS

Lithium

ADDERALL XR[®] **®**
5 mg, 10 mg, 15 mg, 20 mg, 25 mg, 30 mg CAPSULES
(Mixed Salts of a Single-Entity Amphetamine Product)
Dextroamphetamine Sulfate Dextroamphetamine Saccharate
Amphetamine Aspartate Monohydrate Amphetamine Sulfate

Lamictal[®]
lamotrigine tablets

ABILIFY[®]
(aripiprazole)
2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 mg Tablets

Risperdal[®]
RISPERIDONE

KLONOPIN[®]
clonazepam

Seroquel[®]
Quetiapine/Quetiapine

Cardiology

Rx

Inderal[®] **LA**
(propranolol hydrochloride)
Long-Acting Capsules

Repatha[™]
(evolocumab) injection 140 mg/mL

LIPITOR[®]
atorvastatin calcium tablets
25 YEARS OF CHOLESTEROL COMMITMENT

OTC

Ibuprofen

ASPIRIN[®]



**NORDIC
NATURALS**

Dental

Rx

PerioGard[®]

Colgate[®] **PreviDent**[®]
5000 ppm
1.1% Sodium Fluoride
Rx Only

Periostat

Clinpro 500

OTC

Ibuprofen

biotène[®]

SENSODYNE

Colgate

Crest

In-person medical care



Some HCP influencers recommend in-person care to ensure safe, accurate diagnoses and avoid legal or ethical risk

HCP KOIs claim that online consultations or comments **lack physical examination, vital signs, and full medical history:**

- Many symptoms **require hands-on evaluation** or **diagnostic tests** that cannot be done virtually (e.g. biopsy, imaging, lab work)

They also want to **avoid a misdiagnosis** or **delayed treatment** if symptoms suggest a serious or urgent condition

Some also cite that making personalized treatment recommendations online without a formal provider-patient relationship may **violate telemedicine laws or professional codes of conduct**



“Reminder: please no pics, **that should be discussed with your personal in person doctor.** Stay safe! #obgyn #medicine #socialmedia #gyntok no medical advice!

5 main personas

Skin Health Explorers (~20%)

PROFILE

- Mostly women ages 18-27 that deal with acne, rosacea, psoriasis, etc
- They look for step-by-step skincare routines to treat their skin, ingredient breakdowns, and advice on self management vs. dermatologist treatment

PAIN POINTS

- They are confused by conflicting advice and skincare misinformation, product 'overload' & trend fatigue



“ Dermatologist builds you a skincare routine - budget edition #skincarerroutine #budgetskincare

Medical Led Moms (~18%)

PROFILE

- Women ages 24-40 who are either pregnant or moms of young kids that prioritize safe pregnancy and toddler health
- They seek out real expertise on prenatal screening, vaccine schedules, and toddler nutrition, and look to fill the gap between doctor visits

PAIN POINTS

- They have a hard time determining what's trustworthy and what's pseudoscience



“ genuine advice please #pregnantlife #pregnanttiktok #momsoftiktok

5 main personas



Mental Wellness Seekers (~17%)

PROFILE

- Men and women ages 24-45 that struggle with anxiety, depression, burnout, etc. or who want to balance mental wellness, productivity & self compassion
- They look for advice on medication, mental health destigmatization, and self-guided tools like journaling prompts

PAIN POINTS

- They claim that the tone of the HCP KOIs can feel overly medical or dismissive



“ This is an exercise that helps a lot of patients grieve ❤️
#grief #journal
#journaling
#journalprompts



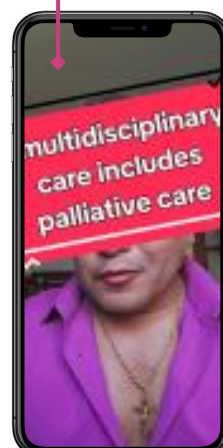
Empowered Health Navigators (~13%)

PROFILE

- Men and women ages 40-65+ who manage serious conditions like neurological health, heart issues or cancer
- They advocate for themselves by seeking out clear, actionable breakdowns of clinical content from specialists and decision support tools

PAIN POINTS

- They have difficulty understanding medical jargon or treatment options



“ #palliativecare is supportive care. new concept of the day, I think for most: **#multidisciplinary cancer management**

5 main personas



Dental Health DIYers (~9%)



PROFILE

- Mostly women ages 28-45 that are concerned with aesthetic appearance, preventing expensive procedures, or who have dental anxiety
- They search for dentist approved DIY tips for at home care and clarity on which issues require a real dentist visit



PAIN POINTS

- They claim that some dental KOIs promote expensive or in-office products, which feel out of reach for many



**DIY: TEETH
WHITENING!?**



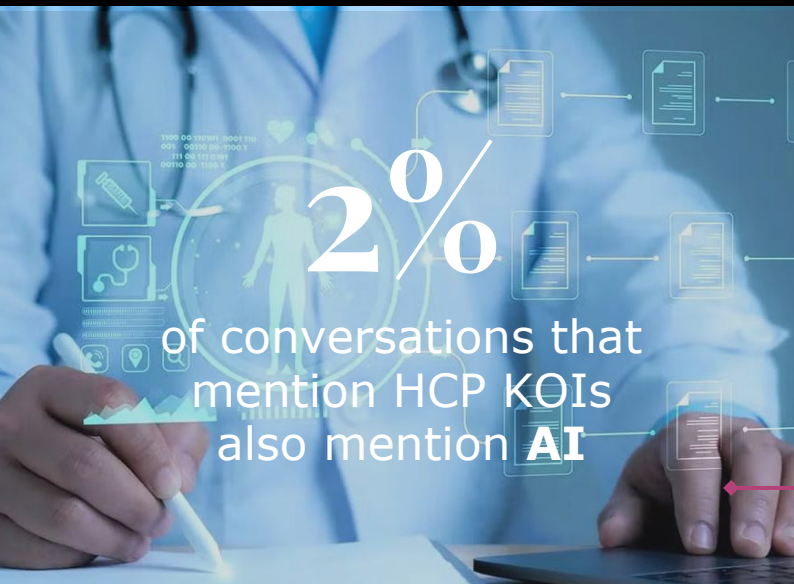
#dentist

#toothsensitivity

#learnontiktok

#doctorsoftiktok

AI as a Healthcare Source



Patients turn to AI for medical advice because it is fast, anonymous, unbiased, and always available

AI like ChatGPT offers **instant, 24/7 answers** that are **free, convenient**, and **accessible**—especially in areas with limited healthcare access

Patients **feel safer asking sensitive questions anonymously**, without fear of judgment or pressure from product-pushing influencers

AI is also seen as **neutral** and **broadly knowledgeable**, making it a trusted first stop for general health concerns before seeking in-person care

Patients share their health concerns with AI which can provide **personalized guidance** and **education tailored to individual symptoms** and contexts, empowering patients to make informed decisions about their health and wellness

Pregnant women also expect AI to explain their levels / numbers to have clear explanations and be reassured



“
#hormonehealth #hormonehealing #chatgpt #ai
#chronicillness #celiacdisease #leakygut #adenomyosis
#adenomyosisawareness #guthealth #gutdysbiosis
#gutdysmotility #sibo #autoimmunedisease #endometriosis
#womenshealth #eczema #dermatitis #rosacea

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