

Reply to: “Comment on ‘YouTube as a source of dermatologic information on isotretinoin’”



To the Editor: We would like to thank Drs Greywal and Marsch for their response to our article “YouTube as a source of dermatologic information on isotretinoin” and for highlighting the limited availability of high-quality dermatologic resources on YouTube.^{1,2} We applaud the authors for creating a comprehensive YouTube video on isotretinoin and the iPledge program produced by medical professionals.¹ The authors’ educational video addresses many of the gaps we identified in our sample of the top 50 most-viewed YouTube videos pertaining to isotretinoin, particularly the lack of videos mentioning the iPledge program (8%).² We hope that the authors’ video is widely viewed so that the public can readily access this educational resource when using YouTube’s proprietary search algorithms, which likely do not account for the accuracy of medical information presented or the profession of the video producer.

We agree that patient comprehension is an important criterion by which to assess the quality of medical information presented in any resource. We also acknowledge that readability and comprehension are particular problems with isotretinoin educational materials, including iPledge documents.³ Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of our study to include patient comprehension as a criterion because we focused on the general public’s access to these videos in a nonclinical setting. Moreover, we were unable to analyze readability and comprehension as a criterion due to the heterogeneity of video formats in our sample, with videos containing variable amounts of content in the form of audio, images, and text. Readability assessments that analyze text, including Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level

and Simple Measure of Gobbledygook Index, among others, would have been inadequate for our study given the large amounts of audio and image content in our video sample.³ Additional efforts to specifically assess patient comprehension of educational resources on YouTube are warranted, and we look forward to future investigation of dermatologic educational resources on YouTube and other social media platforms.

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