



Assessment of YouTube videos about nail health and conditions in Turkish

Tırnak sağlığı ve hastalıkları ile ilgili Türkçe YouTube içeriklerinin değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract

Background and Design: As YouTube becomes more popular as a source of health information, concerns about the reliability of its content are also increasing. While many studies have evaluated health-related content on YouTube, nail-related videos remain under-reviewed. This study aims to assess the engagement and quality of Turkish-language YouTube videos on nail health and disorders, focusing on their subject, content, creators, and sources of information.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional content analysis was conducted on 500 Turkish YouTube videos, collected using relevant keywords. Video data, including upload dates, duration, views, likes, and comments, were retrieved via a Python script using the YouTube Data API. Videos were categorized by uploader and person providing information in the video, and content quality was assessed using the Global Quality Scale (GQS). Descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests were used for data analysis.

Results: The most common video topics were ingrown toenail (39.0%), onychomycosis (31.8%), and nail health and care (9.4%), with the latter receiving the highest engagement in terms of views, likes, and comments. Although healthcare providers were the primary sources of information in 67% of the videos, independent non-healthcare content creators and patients attracted the most interaction. Healthcare professionals, particularly dermatologists, provided higher quality information in the videos than non-healthcare creators, yet these videos received less engagement. Videos containing herbal therapies and alternative medicine garnered the most attention but also had the lowest GQS scores.

Conclusion: Turkish-language YouTube content on nail health and disorders is primarily dominated by non-healthcare creators, who attract higher engagement despite lower content quality. A contrast exists between audience interactions and video quality. Patients seeking health information on YouTube should exercise caution to avoid being misinformed. Healthcare professionals should enhance their online presence by creating accurate and engaging content to ensure patients can access reliable information.

Keywords: Dermatology, nail diseases, nail disorders, nail health, social media, YouTube

Öz

Amaç: YouTube, sağlık bilgisi kaynağı olarak daha popüler hale geldikçe, içeriklerin güvenilirliği konusunda endişeler de artmaktadır. Birçok çalışma YouTube'daki sağlıkla ilgili içerikleri değerlendirmiş olsa da tırnak ile ilişkili videolar yeterince incelenmemiştir. Bu çalışma, tırnak sağlığı ve hastalıklarıyla ilgili Türkçe YouTube videolarının etkileşimini ve kalitesini, konuları, içerikleri, içerik oluşturmaları ve bilgi kaynaklarına odaklanarak değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Çalışma kapsamında, ilgili anahtar kelimeler kullanılarak 500 Türkçe YouTube videosu üzerinde kesitsel bir içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Video verileri, yükleme tarihleri, süreleri, izlenme sayıları, beğeniler ve yorumlar dahil olmak üzere YouTube Data API kullanılarak bir Python betiği aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Videolar, yükleyen kişi ve videoda bilgiyi sağlayan kişiye göre kategorize edilmiş ve içerik kalitesi Global Kalite Skalası (GQS) kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Veri analizi için tanımlayıcı istatistikler ve parametrik olmayan testler kullanılmıştır.

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Bulgular: En sık video konuları tırnak batması (%39,0), onikomikoz (%31,8) ve tırnak sağlığı ve bakımı (%9,4) olup, tırnak sağlığı ve bakımı konusu en yüksek etkileşimi (izlenme, beğeni ve yorum) almıştır. Videoların %67'sinde sağlık profesyonelleri ana bilgi kaynağı olmasına rağmen, bağımsız sağlık dışı içerik üreticileri ve hastalar en fazla etkileşimi çekmiştir. Sağlık profesyonelleri, özellikle dermatologlar, sağlık dışı içerik üreticilerine kıyasla daha yüksek kalitede bilgi sağlamış, ancak bu videolar daha az etkileşim almıştır. Bitkisel tedaviler ve alternatif tipla ilgili videolar en çok ilgiyi görmüş, ancak en düşük GQS puanlarına sahip olmuştur.

Sonuç: Tırnak sağlığı ve hastalıkları ile ilgili Türkçe YouTube içeriği büyük ölçüde sağlık dışı içerik üreticileri tarafından domine edilmekte olup, bu kişiler daha düşük içerik kalitesine rağmen daha yüksek etkileşim çekmektedir. İzleyici etkileşimleri ve video kalitesi arasında belirgin bir fark bulunmaktadır. YouTube'da sağlık bilgisi arayan hastalar, yanlış yönlendirilmemek için dikkatli olmalıdır. Sağlık profesyonelleri, hastaların güvenilir bilgilere erişimini sağlamak amacıyla, doğru ve ilgi çekici içerikler oluşturarak çevrimiçi varlıklarını güçlendirmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dermatoloji, tırnak hastalıkları, tırnak bozuklukları, tırnak sağlığı, sosyal medya, YouTube

Introduction

In the past year, nearly 6 out of 10 individuals have turned to the internet for health or medical information, reflecting the growing reliance on online platforms for healthcare guidance¹. YouTube, as one of the most widely used video-sharing platforms, plays a prominent role in this trend by offering easily accessible and cost-free advice on a variety of health-related topics, including skin conditions. However, despite its accessibility, the accuracy and quality of health information on YouTube can vary significantly, often depending on the source of the content^{2,3}.

Given concerns about the credibility of the information patients access, numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate the reliability of YouTube videos. Among these, studies related to skin disorders have primarily focused on English-language content, examining conditions such as acne^{4,5}, atopic dermatitis^{6,7}, psoriasis^{8,9}, hidradenitis suppurativa¹⁰, and alopecia areata¹¹. However, only a limited number of studies have centered on Turkish-language YouTube content, specifically for acne¹² and psoriasis treatments¹³. Additionally, research on nail disorders is sparse, addressing only onychomycosis treatment¹⁴ and nail biopsy procedures,¹⁵ leaving many other nail conditions largely unexamined.

The primary aim of this study is to assess the quality and reliability of Turkish-language YouTube videos on nail health and disorders, focusing on their subjects, content, creators, and sources of information. As

the use of online platforms for health information continues to grow, healthcare professionals need to evaluate the reliability of popular platforms like YouTube. This evaluation will help ensure patients access accurate and trustworthy information, supporting better health decisions and outcomes.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional content analysis study evaluated Turkish YouTube videos on nail health and disorders. The videos to be included in the study were obtained through a search on the YouTube platform on August 15, 2024, using the Turkish equivalents of the following predetermined keywords: "nail," "nail diseases," "nail disorders," "nail health," "nail fungus," "ingrown nail," "nail dystrophy," "nail tumor," and "nail melanoma." Videos related to acrylic or prosthetic nails, non-therapeutic nail cosmetics, and non-Turkish videos were excluded from the study. Ultimately, 500 relevant videos were included for evaluation (Figure 1). For each video, data were collected on the upload date, time since upload (in days and months), video length (in minutes and seconds), and the number of views, likes, and comments. A Python script utilizing the YouTube Data API was used to initially search and retrieve the exact data from the video URLs to ensure accuracy.

The individual or organization responsible for producing and uploading the video to the YouTube platform was recorded. Various categories were established accordingly, including "physicians," "non-physician

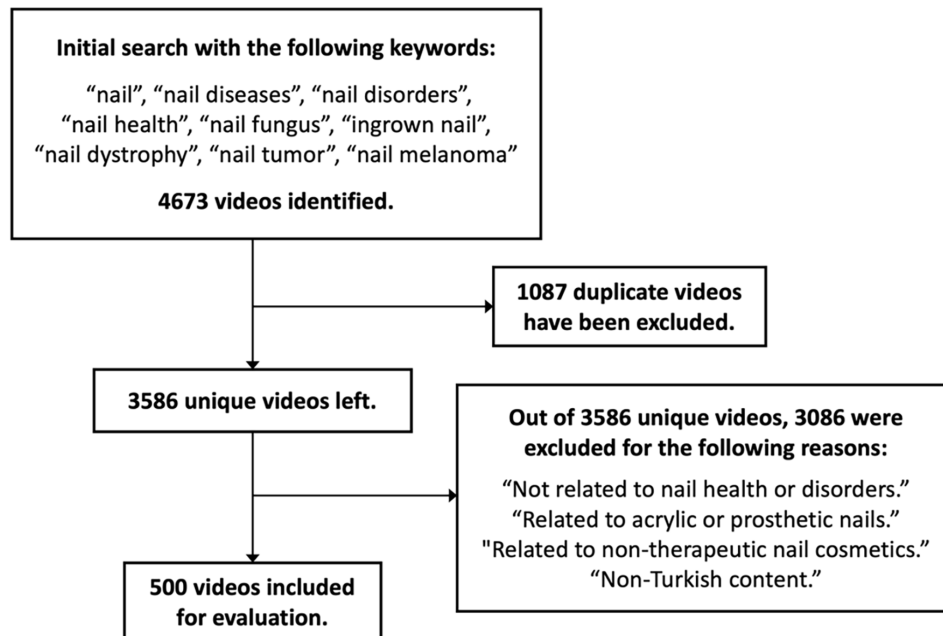


Figure 1. Flowchart of the search process for Turkish YouTube videos related to nail health and disorders

healthcare providers," "private healthcare institutions," "academic institutions," "online healthcare platforms," "television programs or national news agencies," "patients," and "independent non-healthcare content creators." In addition to documenting the uploader, the source of information presented in the video was also recorded, noting whether the individual providing the information in the video was a healthcare professional and, if so, their area of specialty.

The general quality of the videos was assessed for each video by two authors using the Global Quality Scale (GQS), originally developed by Bernard et al.¹⁶ to evaluate medical website quality and also commonly applied to assess the quality of YouTube video content. The GQS is a five-point scale that examines video quality, flow, and usefulness. A score of 1 represents poor quality, indicating that the video is unlikely helpful for patients. A score of 2 reflects poor quality with some helpful information, though its utility for patients remains limited. A score of 3 indicates suboptimal flow, with some information covered but key topics missing, making the video somewhat useful for patients. A score of 4 represents good quality and flow, with the most important issues addressed, providing significant utility for patients. Finally, a score of 5 indicates excellent quality and flow, with comprehensive coverage of relevant topics, making the video highly useful for patients. When the two authors disagreed on a video's GQS score, they reached a consensus to determine the final score.

Statistical Analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for Mac (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). Descriptive values are presented as medians for non-normally distributed continuous variables and frequencies and percentages for categorical variables. Comparisons between two groups were performed using the Mann-Whitney U test for non-normally distributed data, while comparisons involving more than two groups were conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis H test. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Graphs were created using ChatGPT, a language

model developed by OpenAI (OpenAI, 2024). The confidentiality of the individuals and organizations responsible for producing the videos was strictly maintained. Ethics committee approval was not required, as the study did not involve human or animal participants, and the videos were publicly accessible.

Results

The dataset spans videos uploaded to the YouTube platform between May 6, 2012 (approximately 12 years and 4 months ago) and August 13, 2024 (2 days ago), reflecting a broad range of content over more than a decade. The shortest video included is 23 seconds long, while the longest is 86 minutes and 46 seconds. The median video duration is 3 minutes and 14 seconds. The most frequent uploaders were independent non-healthcare content creators (27.4%), followed closely by physicians (27%) (Figure 2). Videos from private healthcare institutions (13.4%) and national media (11.6%) also contributed significantly. Healthcare providers, including both physicians and non-physician professionals, were the prominent persons who provided information in the majority of the videos (335/500, 67%), with physicians dominating this group (231/335, 69%) (Figure 3). Among physician-presented videos, dermatologists were the most prominent (33.8%), followed by specialists in orthopedics (26.8%), general surgery (19%), and internal medicine (6.1%) (Table 1). Notably, podiatry led the non-physician healthcare provider category (83.7%).

The most frequently covered subjects in the videos were ingrown toenails (39.0%), onychomycosis (31.8%), and nail health and care (9.4%) (Figure 4). Less common topics included nail tumors (2.0%), nail melanoma (1.4%), paronychia (1.2%) and nail psoriasis (0.4%). In terms of video content, general information dominated (34.2%), followed by surgical treatment (16.2%) and herbal therapies or alternative medicine (14.0%). The least common categories included medical treatment (4.4%) and laser treatment (1.8%) (Figure 4).

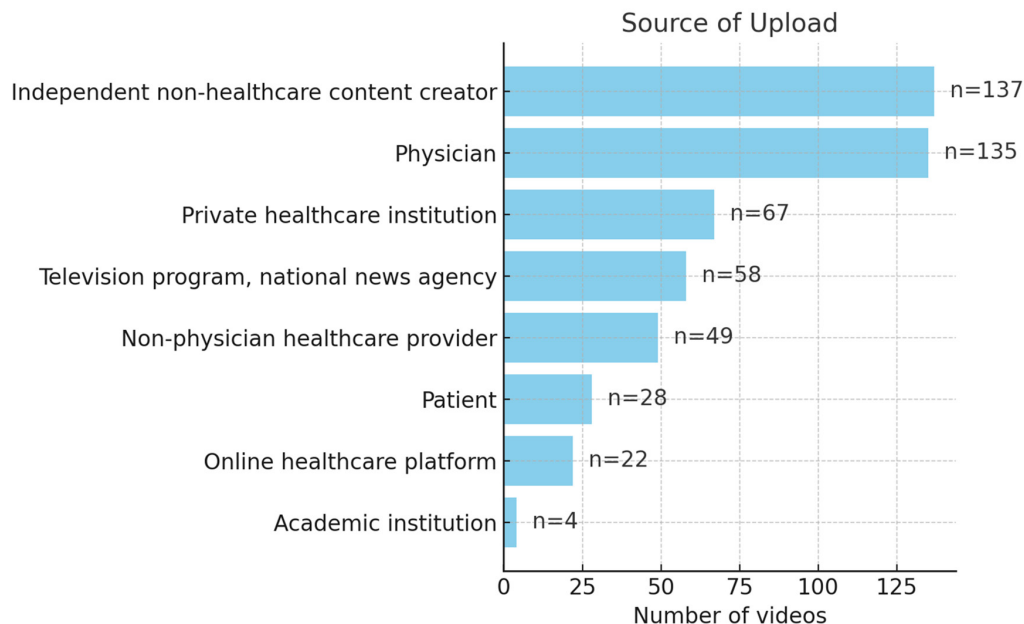


Figure 2. Distribution of YouTube videos by source of upload

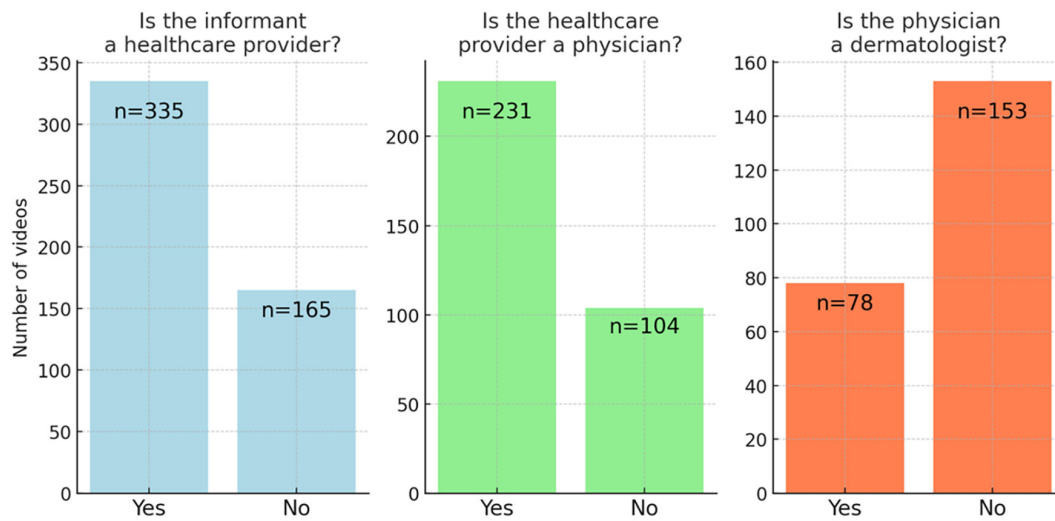


Figure 3. Classification of YouTube videos based on the expertise of the individual providing the information in the video

Table 1. Distribution of healthcare providers' areas of specialty among examined YouTube videos

Healthcare providers' area of specialty	Number of videos	
	%	n
Physician	231	100
Dermatology	78	33.8
Orthopedics	62	26.8
General surgery	44	19
Internal medicine	14	6.1
General practitioner	8	3.5
Psychiatry	8	3.5
Pediatrics	6	2.6
Cardiovascular surgery	5	2.2
Plastic surgery	4	1.7
Pediatric surgery	2	0.9
Non-physician healthcare provider	104	100
Podiatry	87	83.7
Pharmacy	5	4.8
Nursing	4	3.8
Aesthetics	4	3.8
Psychology	3	2.9
Nutrition	2	1.9

Video engagements were thoroughly examined based on the source of upload, video subject, and content. Independent non-healthcare content creators and patients generated the highest median views, likes, and comments, with independent creators receiving 51,051 views, 545 likes, and 31 comments and patients gathering 34,224

views, 173.5 likes, and 52.5 comments (Figure 5). In contrast, videos from academic institutions had the lowest engagement, with a median of only 1,396 views, 4.5 likes, and zero comments. The subject receiving the most interaction was nail health and care, with a median of 35,740 views, 357 likes, and 79 comments. Other topics like paronychia (17,684 views, 90.5 likes, 20 comments), onychomycosis (16,336 views, 90 likes, four comments), and ingrown toenail (14,131 views, 55 likes, nine comments) also attracted significant attention. In comparison, nail melanoma and nail tumors saw the least interaction (4,812 views, 18 likes, zero comments, and 4,030 views, 19 likes, and zero comments, respectively). Regarding content, herbal therapies, and alternative medicine stood out with the highest medians (98,740 views, 856 likes, and 38 comments).

Comparison between different individuals providing information in the videos revealed that informants other than healthcare providers had significantly higher interaction in terms of views, likes, and comments compared to healthcare professionals ($p<0.001$) (Table 2). Among healthcare professionals, physicians had more views and likes than non-physician healthcare providers ($p=0.015$ for views, $p=0.017$ for likes), although the number of comments was similar ($p=0.369$). Videos featuring dermatologists had fewer views, likes, and comments than those from other physician specialties, with all differences showing strong statistical significance ($p<0.001$).

The quality of videos was analyzed based on the upload source, video subject, and content. Videos uploaded by patients and independent non-healthcare content creators had the lowest GQS scores, with medians of 1.0 and 2.0, reflecting the poorest quality (Figure 6). In contrast, videos from academic institutions had the highest quality, with a median GQS of 5.0. For video subjects, nail health and care and onychomycosis had the lowest scores (medians of 2.0). In contrast, nail tumors and melanoma were rated the highest, with medians of 4.5 and 5.0. Regarding content, experience sharing and herbal therapies were rated the lowest (median of 1.0), while general information and laser treatment scored the highest, with a median of 4.0.

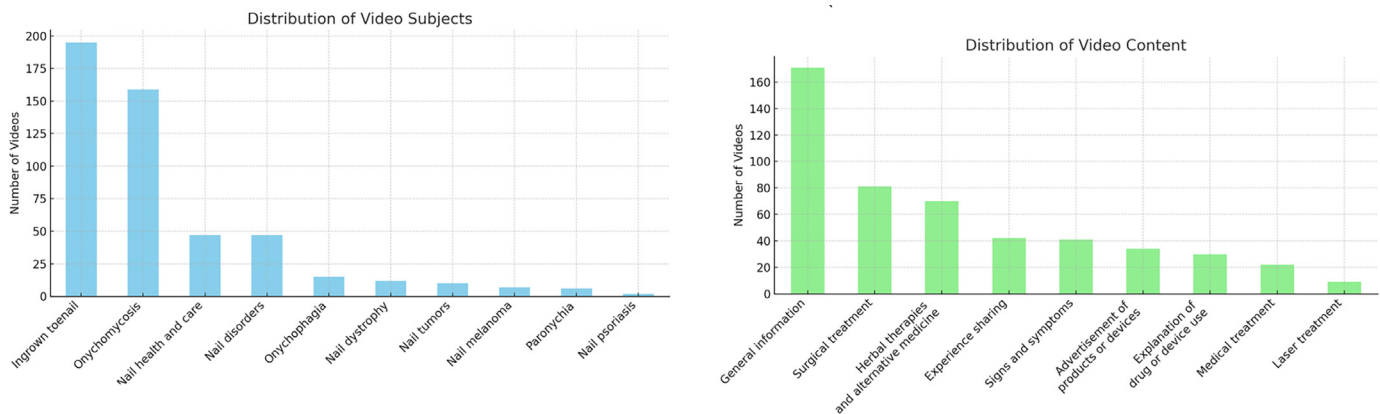


Figure 4. Distribution of YouTube videos by subject and content

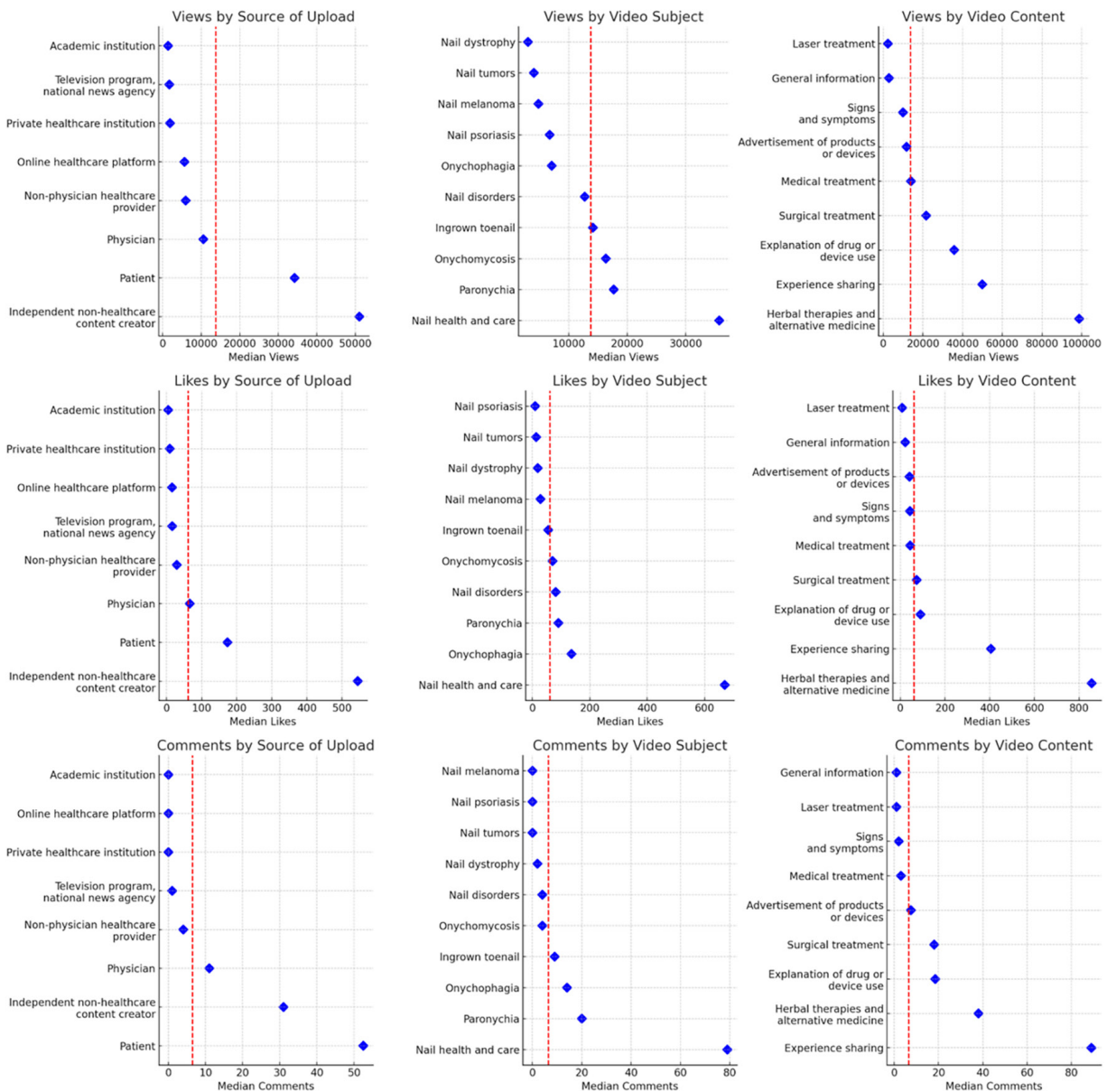


Figure 5. Median views, likes, and comments on YouTube videos are based on the source of upload, subject, and content. The red dotted line in each chart represents the overall median value across all categories for each metric, providing a benchmark to compare different groups

The quality of videos also varied depending on the individual providing the information in the video. Content creators who are not healthcare providers had the lowest GQS scores, with a median of 1.0, reflecting the poorest quality among the groups (Table 3). Non-physician healthcare providers had a median GQS of 3.0, while physicians (excluding dermatologists) also had a median score of 3.0. However, dermatologists had the highest overall quality, with a median GQS of 4.0. The differences in GQS scores across the groups were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), highlighting the superior quality of videos created by dermatologists. Post-hoc analysis confirmed that no statistical difference was found between non-physician healthcare providers and

physicians from other specialties than dermatologists ($p > 0.05$).

Finally, videos discussing or explaining surgical treatments were analyzed according to whether the information provider in the video was a dermatologist or non-dermatologist physician. Only 11 videos (2.2% of all videos) in which dermatologists gave opinions about surgical treatments were identified, whereas other physicians were featured in 58 (11.6%) surgical videos. Only one video described the nail biopsy procedure, which is produced and uploaded by a dermatologist. In parallel with other findings, the number of views, likes, and comments was higher in non-dermatologists, while GQS scores were higher in dermatologists (Figure 7, see plots for p-values).

Table 2. Comparison of median views, likes, and comments between individuals providing information in the YouTube videos

Informant in the video	Number of views		Number of likes		Number of comments	
	Median	p-value	Median	p-value	Median	p-value
Between health professionals and others						
Healthcare providers	5,529	<0.001	28	<0.001	2	<0.001
Informants other than healthcare providers	46,436		399		42	
Among health professionals						
Physicians	6,714	0.015	36	0.017	2	0.369
Non-physician healthcare providers	1,931		15.5		2	
Among physicians						
Dermatologists	1,678.5	<0.001	9	<0.001	0	<0.001
Physicians of other specialties	13,102		75		11	

Table 3. Distribution and comparison of the GQS scores across different categories of individuals providing information in YouTube videos

Informant in the video	Total n	Number of videos for each GQS					Overall GQS		
		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Median	p-value
Content creators other than healthcare providers	165	86	49	21	8	1	1.7	1.0	<0.001
Non-physician healthcare providers	104	20	22	24	29	9	2.9	3.0*	
Physicians other than dermatologists	153	10	40	36	48	19	3.2	3.0*	
Dermatologists	78	2	9	17	24	26	3.8	4.0	

*Post-hoc analysis showed no statistical difference between subgroups ($p > 0.05$).
GQS: Global Quality Scale

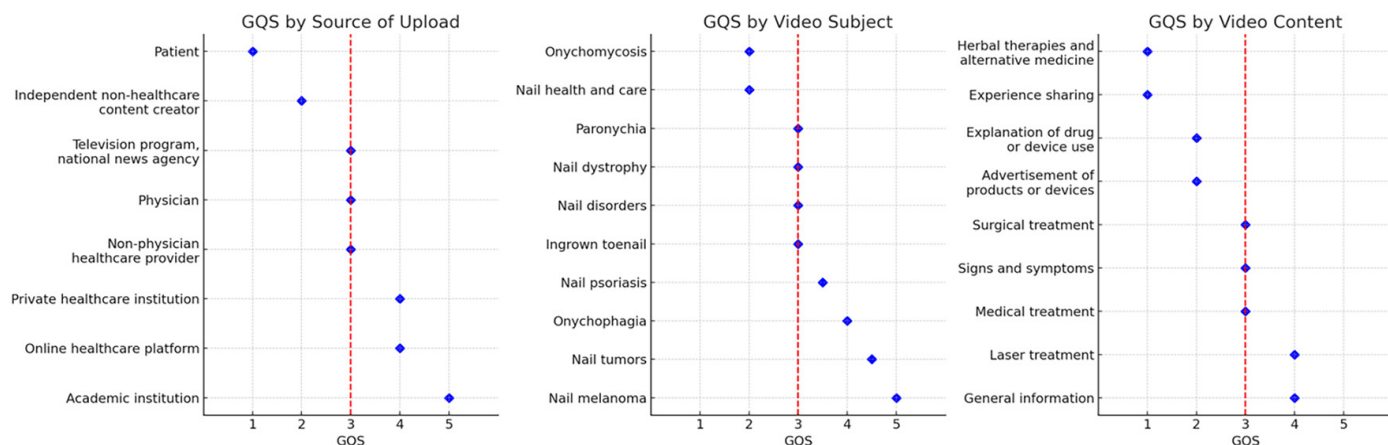


Figure 6. Comparison of the GQS of YouTube videos by source of upload, subject, and content. The red dotted line in each chart represents the overall median value

GQS: Global Quality Scale

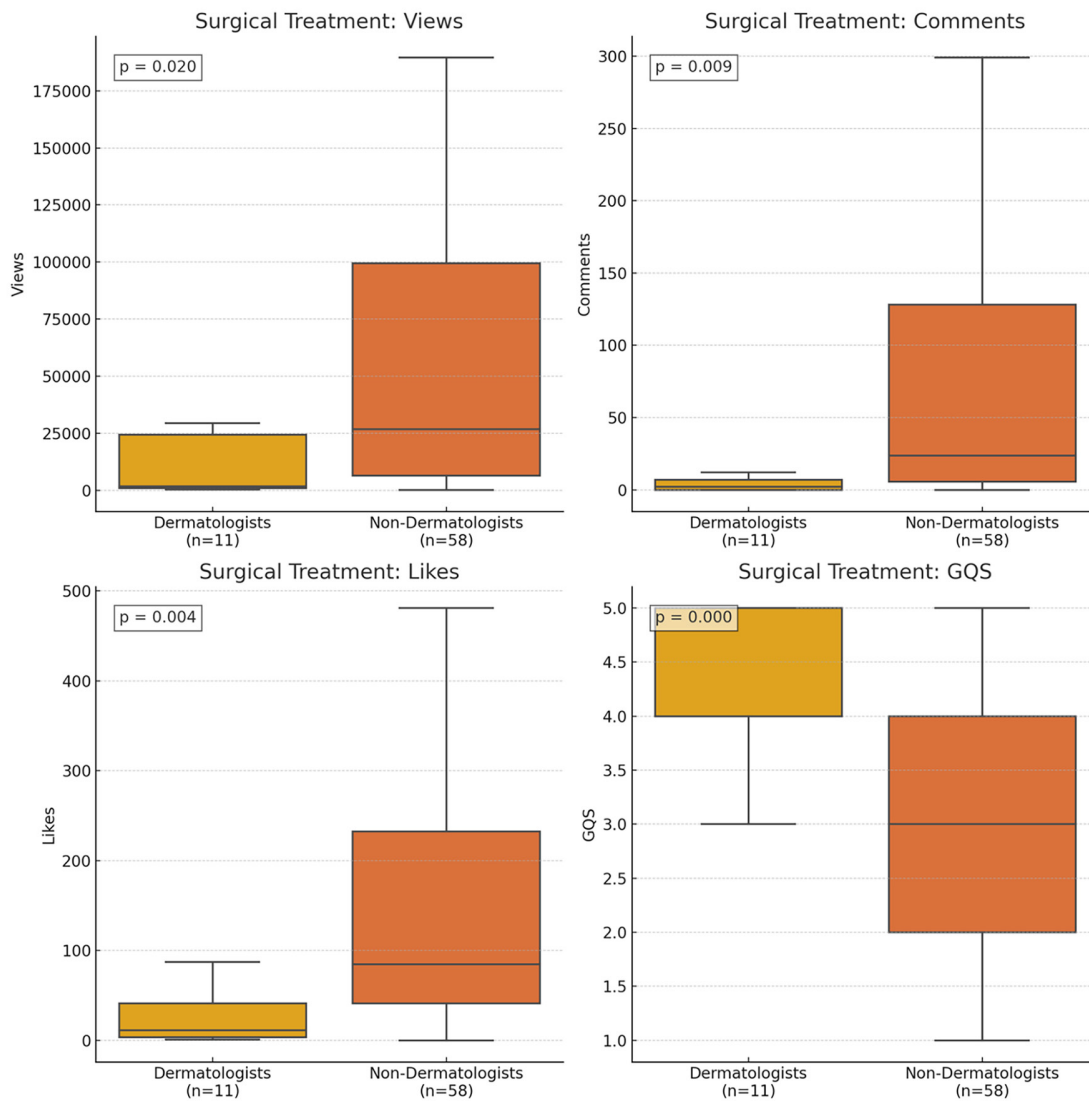


Figure 7. Comparison of views, likes, comments, and GQS between dermatologists and non-dermatologist physicians for videos containing surgical treatments

GQS: Global Quality Scale

Discussion

This study comprehensively evaluates Turkish YouTube content on nail health and disorders, revealing key trends in video topics, interactions, and quality. We found that ingrown toenails and onychomycosis had the most content produced, while videos about nail health and care received the highest levels of interaction. Although most videos provided general information on various conditions or covered surgical treatments, herbal and alternative therapies attracted the most attention from viewers. The highest GQS scores were given to videos on serious topics like nail melanoma and tumors, but these videos had the fewest views, likes, and comments. Non-healthcare content creators and patients dominated engagement, even though their videos were rated lower in quality. In contrast, healthcare professionals, particularly dermatologists, produced higher-quality content but received less

interaction. Similarly, dermatologists had higher GQS scores when discussing surgical treatments than other specialists but still received less engagement.

The discrepancy between the video quality and audience engagement in health-related YouTube videos has been documented in numerous studies. For example, a study by Kaya and Sarıkaya Solak¹² from Türkiye, evaluating YouTube content on acne treatment, found that videos created by non-physicians garnered significantly more views, likes, and comments than physicians. However, the DISCERN score, which assesses the quality and reliability of health information, and the GQS score were notably higher for videos produced by physicians, particularly dermatologists. Despite the superior quality of these physician-created videos, they consistently attracted lower engagement, reflecting a pattern also observed in our study. Dermatologists were found to provide more comprehensive information, prioritizing evidence-

based medical treatments, whereas non-physicians often highlighted alternative therapies such as platelet-rich plasma, chemical peelings, and laser treatments.

Similarly, a study conducted by Güder and Güder¹³ from Türkiye analyzed YouTube content related to psoriasis treatment and found that a significant portion of the videos was produced by non-physician content creators, including pharmacists, herbalists, and patients. These creators often promoted non-evidence-based treatment options, with herbal remedies featured in 65.7% of the videos. Despite the lower quality of these videos, they achieved high levels of engagement, paralleling the trend observed in our study. Güder and Güder¹³ research also highlighted that videos created by healthcare professionals, particularly dermatologists, offered more comprehensive and evidence-based information. In line with Güder and Güder¹³ findings, a study from the U.S. by Pithadia et al.⁸ also reported that over half of the YouTube videos (55.3%) on topical psoriasis treatments, out of the 199 videos they analyzed, promoted natural remedies and alternative medicine rather than evidence-based therapies.

In the existing literature, only two studies have specifically analyzed YouTube content related to nail disorders: one by Nickles et al.¹⁴, which focused on onychomycosis treatment, and the other by Ishack and Lipner¹⁵, which examined nail biopsy procedures. Consistent with our findings, Nickles et al.¹⁴ reported that general informative content was more common in onychomycosis treatment videos, but videos featuring patient experiences were more prevalent among viewers. These patient-driven videos frequently recommended natural remedies such as tea tree oil, apple cider vinegar, and bleach. In the study by Ishack and Lipner¹⁵, the overall quality of videos on nail biopsy procedures was found to be low, with a mean DISCERN score of 1.60 out of 5, reflecting poor information. They also identified significant gaps in essential details, such as anesthetic techniques and repair methods, underscoring the need for higher-quality educational content for patients and physicians. In our study, there was also a noticeable absence of Turkish YouTube content addressing biopsy techniques, highlighting an area needing improvement.

The popularity of non-scientific content, mainly herbal and alternative treatments, presents risks for patients looking for accurate health information. Misinformation can lead to delayed or inappropriate treatments, which is especially dangerous for conditions like melanoma or nail tumors, where early and accurate diagnosis is vital. To address the gap between the quality of information and audience engagement, healthcare professionals need to adapt their communication strategies. This could include simplifying medical jargon and creating more visually appealing, easy-to-understand videos that connect with a broader audience. Academic institutions, professional organizations, and dermatologists themselves should also take a more active role in promoting evidence-based content by endorsing reliable videos on platforms like YouTube. These steps help ensure that accurate and trustworthy health information reaches more people.

Study Limitations

A key limitation of this study is its focus on Turkish-language YouTube content, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other languages or regions. Another limitation is using a single scale (GQS) to assess video quality, which may not capture all aspects of content quality. However, the study's strength lies in its comprehensive evaluation of a

large dataset over a broad time range, providing valuable insights into Turkish content's quality and engagement trends on nail health and disorders.

Conclusion

This study reveals that Turkish YouTube content on nail health and disorders is heavily dominated by non-healthcare content creators, who, despite providing lower-quality information, garnered the highest levels of engagement. Conversely, healthcare professionals, primarily dermatologists, produced higher-quality videos but reached fewer viewers. These results highlight the challenge of closing the gap between engagement and accurate, evidence-based information, as many popular videos could mislead patients. Efforts should be made to enhance the online presence of healthcare professionals and improve public access to accurate, high-quality health content to prevent the spread of misinformation.

Ethics

Informed Consent: Ethics committee approval was not required, as the study did not involve human or animal participants, and the videos were publicly accessible.

Footnotes

Authorship Contributions

Surgical and Medical Practices: O.E., V.A.E., Concept: O.E., V.A.E., A.S.Ş., M.S.G., Design: O.E., V.A.E., M.S.G., Data Collection or Processing: O.E., V.A.E., E.E.A., S.T., A.S.Ş., P.G.D., Analysis or Interpretation: O.E., V.A.E., M.S.G., Literature Search: O.E., V.A.E., Writing: O.E., V.A.E., M.S.G.

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