Urogynaecology Health Information Quality on the Internet: A Multilingual Evaluation

Ishani Saraswat1, Robert Abouassaly2, Peter Dwyer3, Damien M Bolton4 & Nathan Lawrentschuk5

1Department of Surgery, Austin Hospital, Melbourne, Australia, 2 University Hospitals Case Medical Center, Cleveland, OH, USA, 3Mercy Health, Melbourne, Australia, 4Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Austin Hospital and 5Peter, MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, Australia

PURPOSE

• To assess and compare the quality of current Internet information on female urinary incontinence websites based on the HON principles, and to assess for language differences across western languages being English, French, German and Spanish.

• To perform a quality assessment and comparison based on the type of website sponsors

BACKGROUND

• 80% of Internet users use the Internet for guidance on the cause, diagnosis and treatment of their disease [1,2]

• Internet information quality on female urinary incontinence is considered variable and no comprehensive analysis exists to support this.

• The Health on the Net (HON) Foundation is a tool that is a not-for-profit accreditation body supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that is multilingual and has the goal to help identify quality and reliable health information

METHODS

World Health Organisation Health on the Net (HON) principles may be applied to websites using an automated toolbar function. We used the Google search engine. 10,200 websites were identified using seventeen keywords related to female urinary incontinence and treatments in English, French, German and Spanish. First 150 websites in each language had HON principles examined whilst a further analysis of site sponsorship was undertaken

RESULTS

• The first 50 websites retrieved (first tertile) returned the higher percentage of HON accredited websites (p <0.0001) (Figure 1)

• Websites were largely sponsored by Physicians/Surgeons with 37%

• The total number of websites for each term is variable

• 'Female sling surgery' had the most websites with approximately 18million, whereas 'Colposuspension' had the least with only 15,890 websites

• The total percentage of HON-accredited sites was notably low across all search terms with a of median 11% (range 7-13%)

• Regardless of language, very few female urinary incontinence websites were HON accredited (p <0.0001)

• Linguistically, French (18%) and English (16%) had the greatest percentage of HON-accredited sites (Table 1)

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CONCLUSION

• Our study demonstrates that the number of female urinary incontinence websites providing high quality information on the Internet is low, only 11% of the websites met the HON principles

• Discrepancies exist in the quality and number of websites across conditions, languages and also between medical and alternative terms

• Clinicians should participate in and encourage the development of informative, ethical and reliable health websites on the Internet and direct patients to them.

REFERENCES


Table 1 Differences in HON Accreditation of Websites by condition and language (PoHON Accredited sites)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>English (PoHONA)</th>
<th>French (PoHONA)</th>
<th>German (PoHONA)</th>
<th>Spanish (PoHONA)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress urinary incontinence</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress incontinence surgery</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urge incontinence</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grnd Total (median)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 The PoHONA according to tertiles (first, second and third fifty Websites)

PoHONA = Percentage of HON Accredited sites

The percentage of HONCODE Accredited sites (PoHONA) by condition listed according to tertiles (first, second and third fifty retrieved)